ENGLISH GIRLHOOD AT SCHOOL

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'LA VIERGE QUI COUD'

From a stone-carving of the sixteenth century on the Choir-Screen at Chartres Cathedral; artist unknown

'The Legends of the Virgin Mary . . . invest ordinary pursuits with a new dignity by ascribing their practice to the Mother of the Lord', p. 9

ENGLISH GIRLHOOD AT SCHOOL

A Study of Women's Education through twelve centuries

BY
DOROTHY GARDINER

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In gratitude
to
DAME ELIZABETH WORDSWORTH
D.B.E., D.C.L.
to
ANTOINETTE WEBER
and to the memory of
ELIZABETH LEE

PREFACE

AN attempt to survey the history of English girls' education over so long a period is an ambitious project. Yet such a survey seems to be called for. No consecutive study of the subject as a whole has, as far as the writer is aware, hitherto been carried through, although particular periods of outstanding interest have often been described. It is only when developments are followed from stage to stage that it is possible to realize the significant features; to observe the susceptibility of girls' training (compared with that of boys) to the influence of passing modes of thought, and its dependence on 'fashion', —often the caprice of a particular generation; or again to mark the place which religion has at all times held, or the recurrent phenomenon of a few women of exceptional ability who stand out from a confused crowd of the ignorant and untrained; or to appreciate the part which the shepherding of some generous-hearted scholar, like Sir Thomas More, Dr. George Hickes, or Archbishop Secker, has often played in developing natural capacity in a young girl. In attempting to make such an account as complete as possible, the word 'education' must be given a liberal interpretation. In it must be included technical training in handicraft, as well as the reading of classic literature; the 'knowledge of courtesy' as well as the cultivation of musical or artistic talent. The consciousness, however rudimentary, that some kind of preparation for life is necessary for every girl, can be traced in many directions; although the close connexion between the training of women and an adequate fulfilment of their duties to society was but slowly realized. The story of female education has its melancholy aspect, due not least

to the constant ebb and flow of hopes of improvement, a condition which sensitiveness to the time-spirit perhaps made inevitable. There is melancholy also, during the later and more self-conscious stages, in that sense of deprivation, unfulfilment, undeserved contempt and stinted opportunity, of which many capable noble-hearted women were painfully aware. It is not easy to discover the reason for such repeated failure to arrive at any lasting betterment when there was so strong a wish to improve. The great enemy of progress was probably that fundamental 'falsehood' on which Mary Wollstonecraft insisted, the uncomfortable sense that women were somehow out of joint, ill-placed in the social organism. The experiments at reform in themselves lacked system and thoroughness; they failed to build up a race of women-teachers adequately equipped, and even to discover the need of such preparation. At the same time it is well to realize how many women in many centuries took pleasure in books and in acquiring godly knowledge.

To pass in review so long a procession of humanity, the Saxon abbesses, the 'paragons' and their kindly schoolmasters, the humble apprentices, the scholar-queens, the charity-children with their quaint dresses, their well-thumbed testaments, their unending seams; to look into so many adventures of the intellect, so many dreams, so many sorrows; this in itself is a wonderful experience; its reflection, however dim, may perhaps bring a quickened sense of sympathy, gratitude, and encouragement to the women and girls of to-day, whose lot indeed has fallen to them in a fair ground.

D. G.

CANTERBURY.
August 1928.

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I

INTRODUCTORY

1. *The Fathers of the Church*

FROM early days, in widely scattered communities, the Fathers of the Church took a constant, if sombre, interest in the education of the Christian woman, that is in preparing her for the battle of life. Her need of their fostering care could not indeed be gainsaid. Roman civilization from the second century before Christ, and especially at the stage which coincided with the beginnings of the Christian community, had, it is true, already given some measure of liberty and of cultivation at least to a section of its woman-kind. The Christian dogma that 'in Christ is neither male nor female', with its wide implications, was not altogether new, or unacceptable to the more thoughtful of the pagan world; had not Plato advised the selection of women to share the labours of guardians of the State, duly qualified by a like training in music and gymnastic? The Christian ethic, however, demanded a readjustment of fundamental relationships in other circles than that of the socially privileged. At one end of the scale a Pliny, a Calpurnia, might have learned the secret of equality in a perfect marriage-fellowship; at the other end stood the maidens of a slave household, 'caring only to serve the pleasure of men'. Christian standards needed to be affirmed and elucidated in their bearing on the great and the small things of domestic life. And again, as Christian example began to exercise a spell upon persons of leisure and refinement, as well as on humbler folk, the inevitable contrast between its austere simplicities and the daily intercourse of a society tainted with eastern luxury constituted an overwhelming difficulty for the Christian lady.

With these special problems her spiritual teachers from the second century onwards attempted to grapple in a

number of didactic treatises which are of a particular importance for our present inquiry. They indicate an ideal type of womanhood and outline a type of instruction which, modified but never superseded, has influenced the upbringing of English girls, as indeed the girlhood of most European countries, to the present day. As their first occasion required, they are preoccupied not only with great matters of principle, but also with the details of daily life, food, drink, clothing, behaviour at meals, facial expression, gesture and deportment, how to laugh as well as how to pray, with all in short that came to be summed up in the word 'manners'. So much depended on the example set by the Christian woman, her position was so beset with difficulty, that it needed strengthening by the force of childish habit in every possible direction. As we shall discover, a reverent conservatism retained these patristic counsels, even to the last precise details, when their purpose had so long since been forgotten that they had become mannerisms, petty, and artificial.

The complete formula for the unbringing of a Christian girl was gradually developed. Before the close of the second century, Clement of Alexandria, in his *Paedagogus*,[1] defines the relative position of man and woman in Christian society: the Tutor is the Divine Word, who makes human life his instrument of education as much for women as for men; men and women share the common title of mankind, they share the divine promises, grace and salvation; temperance, chastity, hope, obedience, these great words mean the same for either; on the same bodily functions, on the same food both depend. But while the writer states triumphantly the fundamental truth, with its transforming significance, the social revolution which it implies is no less clear, and it makes him, a Greek man of the world, eager to forearm women of the Christian community against dangers incidental to their independence.[2] He is at pains to set out step by step the

[1] Lib. I, cap. iv (Migne, *Patrol. Graec.*, viii, p. 259).
[2] Lib. II, cap. ii (p. 410).

discipline of the consecrated life. In conditions of luxury and excess, Christians must be distinguished by moderation and self-control. For this reason he would have the Christian boy and girl take no wine, while their good manners at table should set an example of consideration for the comfort of others. Even immoderate laughter is a snare to young girls; it distorts their faces, and may easily win them a bad name; a smile is all that is permissible.[1] This writer borrows an ideal picture of a Christian maid's deportment from Zeno of Citium.[2] She must be pure of countenance, neither her brows downcast nor her eyes uplifted, her head not poked forward, much less hanging down dejectedly, her limbs not lounging but held tense and erect. Spinning and weaving, the making and ornamenting of garments, far superior to any bought in a shop, the care of the household, the preparation of food, these are the occupations which belong to God's law of life for a woman.

Practical counsels of this character, in which condemnation of extravagance in dress, and especially of dyes and cosmetics, alternates with earnest injunctions to prayer and praises of the virgin life, are found during the third, fourth, and fifth centuries in works such as the *De Cultu Feminarum* of Tertullian, and St. Cyprian's *De Habitu Virginum*, and in the Exhortation to the Bride of Christ of St. Athanasius which is distinguished by a tone of exceptional purity and sincerity. St. Ambrose's treatise *De Virginibus*, addressed to his sister Marcellina, one of seven young girls consecrated to the religious life in 355, calls the reader's attention to the example of St. Agnes[3] and the virgin martyrs and, in a passion of admiration for the cloistered life, defends girls who enter religion contrary to the wish of their parents:

Si vincis domum vincis saeculum.[4]

[1] Clemens Alexandrinus, *Paedagogus*, Lib. II, cap. v (p. 446).
[2] Ib., Lib. III, cap. xi (p. 650).
[3] St. Ambrose, *De Virginibus*, Lib. I, cap. ii (Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, xvi, col. 189).
[4] Ib., Lib. I, cap. xi (col. 206).

All these treatises continued to be more or less living influences in European thought up to and beyond the Reformation period: practically all, for example, are quoted by Vives in his *Education of a Christian Woman* (written in 1523 and translated into English 1540), as being the voices of authority, works to be studied, in place of the fashionable romance, by every intelligent and serious-minded girl.

More widely quoted than any of these authors were the letters of St. Jerome to the Christian ladies of his circle, Demetrias, Eustochium, Furia, Salvina, and especially the letter to Laeta on the education of her daughter Paula, and its companion letter on the upbringing of the little Pacatula. In substance these letters do not vary greatly from those authorities already summarized, but the fact that they are not theological dissertations addressed to a congregation but are composed by a child-lover with children in view for whom he had a personal regard, gives them a much warmer human interest. Their tone is uplifting, fatherly, as well as sage and practical; in them the patristic ideal of womanhood is set out in its most attractive light. Laeta, the recipient of the more important letter, had married Toxotius, son of Paula, a Roman lady of noble family, and brought him to the Christian faith; her daughter, also named Paula, was probably vowed to the religious life from birth, and joined her aunt, the Abbess Eustochium, at a very early age, in her convent at Bethlehem,[1] given, in St. Jerome's words, as a precious jewel 'to the couch of Mary and the Cradle of Jesus'.

St. Jerome dwells much on the importance of early influence;[2] little Paula should be permitted to hear and speak nothing but what is of godliness: she should remain in happy ignorance alike of shameful words and worldly songs. For her earliest lessons letters of boxwood or ivory are to be made, and as she plays with them and names them aloud she will learn to distinguish one from another

[1] Farrar, *Lives of the Fathers*, 1907, ii, p. 390.
[2] St. Jerome, Ep. cvii (Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, xxii, col. 867).

both by sight and sound. When she begins with unsteady fingers to guide her stilus over a waxen tablet, an elder hand may control the tender muscles; or, when she draws her first strokes, parallel lines will keep them from straying over the surface. A prize may be given her for building up syllables correctly, some such little gift as a child of her age delights in. Competition is good, and she should have companions to emulate. She is not to be scolded if slower than they are, but is to be constantly encouraged so that success becomes a delight, and failure distressing to her. It is well to beware at first of making study hateful lest the dislike extend beyond infant years. Her master is to be chosen for suitability of age, character, and acquirements; no learned man need be ashamed to do for this little girl of gentle birth what Aristotle did for Philip's son.

There is a charming description of the little child's delight at seeing her grandfather Albinus (still in fact a pagan and a priest of the heathen rites), of the way in which she throws her arms around his neck and sings again and again to him the 'alleluia' which has been her earliest task. Her grandmother snatches her up, her father smiles at her, the whole family rejoice over this 'rosebud sprung of their stock'. Then is the time to remind the little novice under what leader, and for what army she is being brought up. The very fashion of her dress should teach her she is vowed to God. As she grows older, it is best that she should not eat in public, that is among her parents' guests, lest she should hanker after delicacies. Some think it better to know what is to be known and acquire strength to contemn luxury: St. Jerome prefers to leave the young mind in ignorance. He would allow her no opportunity of hearing the organ played, or the flute, lyre, or harp. She may, however, learn the rhythm of Greek verses, to be followed by the study of Latin: it is important for a child to acquire while still very young the proper enunciation of her native tongue and in this respect her mother may well be her instructress. The parents of

a dedicated child must be specially careful what she learns from their example: 'Too quickly the flowers perish, too quickly pestilential airs wither violet, crocus, and lily.'

The child's mother is to be her watchful companion when she goes to the Basilicas of the Martyrs or to church. No curly-headed lad must be permitted to smile at her nor should she have any particular favourite among her handmaids with whom to whisper secrets; the best companion for her is not a pretty girl, with a sweet song on her lips, but a pale, severe, sombre, melancholy woman, whose example may accustom her pupil to a constant devoutness.

Handicraft is also of the greatest importance—for the right use of time. Let her learn to spin wool, and hold the distaff, set in her lap the thread-basket, twirl the spindle, and guide the thread with her thumb. Merely ornamental work, unwinding the silk-worm's weft, or twisting gold thread, she must be taught to despise, for the divine codices are to take the place of jewels and embroidery in her affections. The parts of Scripture are to be studied in due order, the Psalter first and the Proverbs of Solomon, and the Gospels are never to be far distant from her hand. For the rest, Cyprian's little book is to be a constant companion, with the Epistles of Athanasius and Hilary.

The companion-letter,[1] on the education of Pacatula, another child dedicated to the religious life before she could distinguish good and evil, follows similar lines, and is marked by the same charming sympathy with the child-mind. How can you, says the writer, exhort to modesty a maid so young as Pacatula, when what she longs for is a cake; she who sits babbling on her mother's knee, who loves honey and a pretty tale far beyond the most profound advice.

These pictures deserve somewhat detailed study; St. Jerome, painting in the final touches, himself admits that

[1] St. Jerome, Ep. cxxviii (Migne, xxii, col. 1095.)

his ideals are unsuited for the workaday world, and can be brought to perfection only among the 'virgin choirs'. His counsels were adapted in the main to the circumstances of his age, to an upbringing in a pagan *milieu*, and to particular children, but many of them have a permanent and universal value. For example the predominant place which he gave to instruction in the faith and to religious exercises; the lines laid down for sound instruction in the elements, in the mother tongue, in good literature; the importance attached to careful teaching in handicraft; all these things were rightly and wisely absorbed into the very marrow of the Christian social ethic, and characterize the practice of girls' education at all periods.

In other directions he is less wholesome, limited in his application; his condemnation not merely of sinful luxury but of all the joys of sense, which implies the banning of self-expression in music, painting or drama, probably helped for centuries to discount woman's contribution to art, except in so far as it could find expression through the medium of embroidery. His denunciation of music was indeed disregarded; but song and the playing of lute and harp were looked on as dangerous if bewitching accomplishments of the courtly damsel. His warnings against the evils which must result from any measure of personal liberty, are repeated parrot-like by every medieval moralist. Following in his steps they advocate an oriental seclusion. For instance, Guido de Colonna, whose work on the Regiment of Princes[1] was certainly known to Englishwomen,[2] requires above all things that girls, in whom reason was undoubtedly deficient, should be kept closely at home and constantly employed. Vives at the Renaissance is still found of the same way of thinking:[3]

[1] *De Regimine Principum*, Bk. II, Pt. I, ch. xix, MS. in D. and C. Library, Canterbury.

[2] In 1467 Peter Arderne bequeathed to his daughter, Anne Bohun, 'my Frensshe booke, Giles de Regimine Principum.' *Test. Ebor.*, iv. 102 note.

[3] Foster Watson, *Vives*, p. 94.

'Forth the maid must needs go sometimes, but I would it should be as seldom as may be for many causes. Principally because as often as a maid goeth forth amongst people, so often she cometh in judgment and extreme peril of her beauty, honesty, demureness, wit, shamefastness, and virtue.'

There is a similar unwholesomeness in Jerome's dread of youth's influence upon youth, which set boy and girl poles apart, and made suspect even the gay chatter of a girlish companion. It is a curious commentary upon his recommendation of an 'honest woman of sad age', his governess *gravis*, *pallens*, *sordidata*, *subtristis*, as the one safe guide of girlhood, that the duenna of the Romances is so often represented as a most corrupting influence.

Many of his restrictions, indiscriminately adopted by the Church as a sound basis for female upbringing, were in fact morbid. Indeed his preoccupation with the virtue of chastity and its converse, which he shares with most of the early Christian writers upon the theme of womanhood, became, when Christian marriage was an established custom, a definite source of danger: the argument of woman's frailty was often snatched by unsanctified hands. St. Jerome, in the face of obvious pitfalls, hedged round his young oblate with cautions, and finally removed her from danger into a nunnery. Such a negative policy, when paganism was no longer a ruling force, was disastrous; it encouraged a habit of suspicion, it surrounded the young girl with an atmosphere of contemptuous mistrust; it induced in many types of women unreal standards of anaemic correctness; it exalted a certain demure religiosity above the more robust yet not less womanly qualities which thrive in contact with, and by a steadfast resistance to the temptations of everyday life.

No doubt there were always bad women enough, but there might have been more good women, less pettiness, less frailty, less practised deceit, had a system of trust, based upon the encouragement of self-respect, earlier superseded the old vitiated half-pagan atmosphere.

2. *Legends of the Virgin Mary*

Another element in the upbuilding of educational ideals for women, holding an important place in the admonitions of St. Jerome, is the tradition embodied in legends of the Blessed Virgin Mary.[1] The earliest to take literary form are found in the Book of James or Protevangelium, which may be assigned to the second century of the Christian era,[2] and was written in Greek. No Latin version exists, but the eighth- or ninth-century Latin Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew is based on similar material.

These legends clearly represent an attempt to give Divine authority to conditions which already obtained, and to invest ordinary pursuits with a new dignity by ascribing their practice to the Mother of the Lord, finding sanction in the pages of the Old and New Testament. From this point of view a study of the legends is extremely interesting and enlightening. A central passage is contained in chapter vi of the Pseudo-Matthew.[3]

From the age of three to fourteen, Mary is educated with other girls within the enclosure of the Temple, hears the sacred offices and dances before the Lord.

'And she was held in admiration by all the people of Israel; and when she was three years old she walked with a step so mature, she spoke so perfectly and spent her time so assiduously in the praises of God that all were astonished at her and wondered; and she was not reckoned a young infant, but as it were a grown-up person of 30 years old. She was so constant in prayer, and her appearance was so beautiful and glorious, that scarcely any one could look into her face. And she occupied herself constantly with her wool-work, so that she in her tender years could do all that old women were not able to do. And this was the order that she had set for herself:

[1] The words of St. Ambrose (*De Virginibus*, Lib. II, cap. ii) illustrate the characteristic attitude: '[Maria] de qua velut speculo refulgeat species castitatis et forma virtutis. Hinc sumatis licet exempla vivendi ubi tamquam in exemplari magisteria expressa probitatis, quid corrigere, quid effingere, quid tenere debeatis, ostendunt.' . . .

[2] *The Apocryphal New Testament*, trans. M. R. James (1924), pp. 38, 70.

[3] *Apocryphal Gospels*, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, vol. xvi, p. 23.

From the morning to the third hour she remained in prayer; from the third to the ninth hour she again applied herself to prayer . . . in the praises and vigils of God none were found before her, no one more learned in the wisdom of the law of God, more lowly in humility, more elegant in singing, more perfect in all virtue . . . no one saw her angry, nor heard her speaking evil . . . she was anxious lest by any word of hers she should sin with regard to her companions. She was afraid lest in her laughter or the sound of her beautiful voice she should commit any fault, or lest, being elated she should display any wrong doing or haughtiness to one of her equals.[1] She blessed God without intermission and, lest perchance, even in her salutation, she might cease from praising God, if any one saluted her, she used to answer by way of salutation Thanks be to God. And from her the custom first began of men saying Thanks be to God when they saluted each other. She refreshed herself only with the food which she daily obtained from the hand of the angel; but the food which she obtained from the priests she divided among the poor. . . . If any one who was unwell touched her, the same hour he went home cured. . . .'

Any one familiar with the medieval habit of dwelling upon the scanty outline of some well-loved tale, expanding, adorning, drawing out its inner significance, must find in this passage the germ of much characteristic thought. There is the admiration of early precocity; the importance of gesture and deportment, sweet-voiced singing and hushed laughter; the display of piety in constant religious exercises; the consecration of handicraft: the stress upon particular virtues, such as humility, the suppression of all undue emotional expression, submissiveness to parents. A whole system of medieval courtesy was built up around the salutation of Mary—nor must her powers of healing be overlooked in estimating the value set upon medical knowledge in the well-trained woman. Above all, Mary alone had 'found out the new order of life', virginity, not in its lovely idiosyncracy, but in the connotation characteristic of medieval didactic writings addressed

[1] One MS. has 'She was anxious about her companions lest any of them should sin even in one word, lest any of them should raise her voice in laughter, lest any of them should be in the wrong or proud to her father or her mother'.

to women, which discount the dignity of marriage and exalt a conventual seclusion. The reflection of all these ideas and practices is seen brightly in the lives of mediæval saints like St. Catharine of Siena, but dimly also in the lives of countless humble women of all nations; the process of inculcating them into girlish minds went on through the centuries with surprising tenacity.

The attempt made before the end of the second century to link up the normal occupations of women with Divine events is very beautifully exemplified in the story of the veil of the Temple found both in the Protevangelium and Pseudo-Matthew.[1] It is determined at a Council of the Priests to make a new veil for the Temple of the Lord. It is to be the handiwork of 'undefiled virgins of the family of David', and seven young girls, among them the Child Mary, are brought into the temple to receive their directions. And the priest said: 'Choose for me by lot who shall spin the gold and the white and the fine linen and the silk and the blue and the scarlet and the true purple. And the true purple and the scarlet fell to the lot of Mary, and she went away to her house and took the scarlet and spun it.'

The angel of the Annunciation first appears to her when she is busied with household tasks, filling a pitcher at the well, and on reaching her room, trembling and astonished, she turns to her needlework for consolation. 'She put down the pitcher and taking the purple she sat

[1] *Protevangelium of St. James*, ch. x, pp. 6 and 7; *Apocryphal Gospels*, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, vol. xvi. It is noteworthy that from the thirteenth century onwards the Education of the Virgin became not seldom a theme for artistic treatment. It was painted by Pinturicchio in Italy, by Murillo and Roëlas in Spain. In France it occurs as an altar-piece in churches at Bourges and Niort, and is sculptured in white marble at Ste-Colombe-lès-Vienne. A representation of Our Lady at school appears in a thirteenth-century window at Chartres, where the beautiful stone figure of La Vierge qui coud belongs to the same category of ideas. A fifteenth-century window at All Saint's Church, York, and an illuminated manuscript in the Bodleian, illustrate St. Anne teaching the Blessed Virgin to read. These scattered examples (and they could doubtless be multiplied) suggest that the subject was one commended by the Church to women of many lands.

down on her seat and drew it out.' When later on she visits the house of Zacchaeus, Elizabeth throws down the wool on which she is at work and hastens to the door to meet her.

Such episodes as these, with their appeal to religious emotion, their power to ennoble drudgery, account to some extent for the remarkable prominence, far exceeding the actual needs of every day, which needlework and embroidery occupied in girls' upbringing; this was in fact the one legitimate and consecrated channel of their artistic development.

II

SAXON TIMES

1. *The Influence of France*

LITTLE remains to indicate any tradition of learning among women in these islands during the Roman occupation. The description which Geoffrey of Monmouth gives of Helen, daughter of King Coel and wife of the Emperor Constantine, belongs to the region of romance and reflects ideas of the twelfth century.[1] When the early conversion of Britain to Christianity and the intercourse between the Continent and the British Church are remembered, it is not fanciful to suppose that in this province of the Empire there existed a degree of cultivation comparable with that of the neighbouring province of Gaul; of the character of Gaulish culture some idea may be gathered from the writings of Apollinaris Sidonius (428–83), which show a high ideal of female virtue and accomplishment in the Gallo-Roman Society in which he lived.

In France the practices of the Roman Schools were interrupted, on the one hand by the Frankish invasion, on the other by the spread of the monastic ideals of Cassian, which advocated a type of education mistrustful of, if not hostile to, pagan learning.

There also the problem of nunnery schools seems to have been coeval almost with the nunneries themselves. The fifth-century Rule of St. Caesarius, for the convent at Arles,[2] forbids girls whether of noble or of humble birth to be received into the house for nurture and education; occasionally some little maid of six or seven years, able to learn her letters and submit to obedience, might be admitted, presumably a child-oblate, though this is not

[1] *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. San Marte, Bk. V, ch. vi, p. 24, and see Healy, *Insula Sanctorum et Doctorum*, p. 27, for some evidence of literary culture in Ireland in the third century.

[2] St. Caesarii *Regula ad Virgines*, v; Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, lxxvii, col. 1107.

expressly stated. Evidently advantage was taken of the concession, for in a subsequent Rule of St. Aurelian[1] for the same house, little children are exempted from the obligation to follow the order of psalmody, study, and task-work, for which their strength is insufficient. In the sixth century more than one French convent contributed an abbess, a lover of learning and teacher of the young, to the roll of the saints. St. Radigund, the Thuringian queen of Clothaire V of France and the friend of Fortunatus, when she retired to the convent of her own foundation at Poitiers, habitually studied the works of Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, Athanasius, Hilary, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Sedulius, and Paulus Orosius.[2] It was her practice to teach the nuns herself, explaining obscure passages when they read together. In the next century, St. Gertrude, Abbess of Nivelle, knew the greater part of the Scriptures by heart, and had books from Rome, and even teachers from Ireland, to instruct the novices.[3] French nuns were expected to learn to read, and to devote two hours every morning to study. At Arles they had also a daily task of wool-work; but feather-work (*plumaria*) and all kinds of fanciful embroidery were forbidden, unless the abbess required it upon certain napkins and handkerchiefs.[4] The avoidance of sinful idleness and aimless leisure was a *sine qua non* of the monastic rule.

With these well-established standards of religious and manual instruction, English girls were brought into touch at a very early period. It might even be possible to carry back the connecting thread beyond the coming of Augustine: Gregory the Great expressly states in his correspondence about the English Mission that Queen Bertha, daughter of Charibert, King of the Franks, was 'instructed in letters'.[5] Nothing is known of her teachers, whether she was convent-bred, or, like St. Radigund, so nearly her

[1] St. Aureliani *Regula ad Virgines*, xviii; Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, lxxviii, col. 402.
[2] C. Jourdain, *Mémoire sur l'Éducation des Femmes au Moyen Age*, p. 83.
[3] Jourdain, p. 84.
[4] St. Caesarii *Regula ad Virgines*, xlii; Migne, lxxvii, col. 1116.
[5] Mason, *Mission of St. Augustine to England*, 1897, p. 58.

contemporary, received her education in the royal palace. Her tutor may well have been Bishop Luithard, who accompanied her to England on her marriage with Ethelbert. Eadbald, Bertha's son, was also married to a Frankish princess, Emma, who in 618 attested a grant of land at Northbourne to St. Augustine's.[1] We have from Bede the definite information that 'at that time (*c.* 640) but few monasteries being built in the country of the Angles many were wont, for the sake of monastic conversation, to repair to the monasteries of the Franks or Gauls; and they also sent their daughters there to be instructed and delivered to their heavenly Bridegroom, especially in the monasteries of Brie, of Chelles, and Andelys'. Earcongota, daughter of Eadbald and Emma, took the veil at Brie, where Sethrid and Ethelburga, princesses of East Anglia, ruled as abbesses.[2] Both English boys and girls were pupils at the Abbey of Chelles, originally a Frankish settlement, whence, under the rule of St. Bertilla, schoolmistresses and books were sent into neighbouring countries.[3]

2. *The Northern Abbesses*

French conventual influence was not confined to the princesses of Kent; but by an accident it passed by the most remarkable figure of Saxon monasticism. About the year 657 when Heresuid, mother of Aldwulf, King of the East Angles, was living as a professed nun in the monastery of Chelles, her sister Hild, who had embraced the faith at the teaching of Paulinus, journeyed into East Anglia intending to join her in France. Bishop Aidan, however, recalled her to Northumbria, to succeed to the abbacy of Hartlepool.[4] In Hild we have therefore a religious teacher brought up almost entirely under English influences.

[1] De Gray Birch, *Cart. Saxon.*, vol. i, p. 20.

[2] Bede, Hist. Eccles. Lib. III, cap. viii (ed. Plummer, vol. i, p. 142).

[3] Jourdain, p. 84. The story of St. Milthrith's schooldays at Chelles, of the book in which she hid her torn locks between the pages and wrote of her troubles in the psalmist's words; of the abbess's cane, and the school-fellows who wept at their friend's flight, is a lively fable of the fourteenth-century hagiologist. See *Nova Legenda Angliae*, ed. C. Horstman, 1901, p. 193.

[4] Bede, Lib. IV, cap. xxi (xxiii) (Plummer, vol. i, p. 253).

In trying to estimate without unreality or exaggeration her place in educational records, it is well to picture the surroundings in which she lived. The Court of Northumbria in the seventh and eighth centuries presented 'a pitiable spectacle of violence, vice and intrigue';[1] many of its kings met a violent death; even the sanctity of the convent was not always inviolate from kingly reprobates. It was no wonder that the noblest of the royal house should fly eagerly from a degradation intolerable by contrast with the unearthly purity of the Christian ideal.

Hild came to rule her double houses, first at Hartlepool, next at Whitby, at a period in the history of the Northumbrian church when scholarship was being developed as an adjunct to the religious life; when to study, write, and teach all known branches of learning was becoming one of the qualifications for leadership.[2] There is no ground for believing that her abbeys were ever a centre of learning such as Jarrow, but beyond question the impression she herself made upon scholars was one of intellectual force. She possessed a sense of historic Christianity, basing her administrative schemes on the knowledge of primitive practice which she had gained from Aidan and other learned men. These looked to her for intellectual companionship, gave her of their scholarship, delighted in her gifts of mind and inborn saintliness. She possessed a grasp of affairs and of the principles of government, so that in emergency those in high places sought her advice. She urged upon all under her direction the practice of a wise administration as well as the unremitting study of Scripture, and her training constituted an adequate preparation for the priesthood, even for the episcopate. She had the power of inspiring others with her own enthusiasm; one of her monks, after experience in her monasteries, went on from Whitby to Canterbury to pursue his studies

[1] H. E. Savage, 'Northumbria in the Eighth Century,' *Archaeologia Aeliana*, N.S., vol. xxi, p. 270 (1898).

[2] Savage, loc. cit., p. 259.

under Archbishop Theodore. To her Cædmon owed the encouragement of his poetic talent and by her order he was 'taught the whole series of sacred history'.[1] It is clear that Bede could not have written of Hild in the terms he uses had she not been a woman of unusual gifts and untiring industry. He mentions her chiefly in relation to the male members of her houses, but she inspired ardent affection in the nuns also, while she had a regular system of instruction for the women newly converted, who were kept on probation in a remote part of the building till they were adjudged ready to be taken into the society of the congregation.

The time and circumstance of her life gave her little opportunity of extended influence; it is as the first great English woman-teacher, great by the power of outstanding personality, that she must take her place in the history of education.

3. *Women Scholars in Southern England*

After the death (in 713) of Hild's successor and pupil, Ælflæd, the daughter of King Oswy, who was 'betrothed to Christ' in her earliest infancy and showed the result of Hild's training in a sound judgement and power of initiative, the monastery of Whitby sank into insignificance. Upon the death of Bede (*c.* 731), the centre of Northern scholarship removed from Jarrow to York. Meanwhile, the little taper of learning in the nunnery was burning brightly in more southerly parts of England. In every case the group of studious women centred round a scholar devoted to their intellectual improvement. At the centre of the East Saxon group, in the convent of Barking, is the genial figure of the scholar Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborne, who was related to the royal house of Wessex. He wrote his most famous work, *De Laudibus Virginitatis*, for Hildelith, Abbess of Barking, and an illumination at the beginning of an eighth- or ninth-century manuscript shows the abbess kneeling, with her nuns around her, to

[1] Bede, Lib. IV, cap. xxii (xxiv) (Plummer, p. 258).

receive the precious gift.[1] The treatise describes the nunnery as a little world within the world; and compares the nuns' thoughts to a swarm of bees issuing from the hive to seek the honey of knowledge. The nuns are to read the Prophets, the books of the Law, the fourfold sayings of the Gospel, but the Bible is by no means to be their only book. They may turn to the comments of Catholic Fathers and there study ecclesiastic tradition and history; they are to use ancient fables as a subject for verse, and to look into the rules of grammar, and 'the discipline of orthography'. The writer also recommends Cassian's Collations of the Fathers, and Gregory's *Thirty Books of Morals*, and quotes largely from Rufinus's *Books of Ecclesiastical History*.[2]

We have no means of knowing how far the educational programme of the *De Laudibus* remained a counsel of perfection, but, judging by the acquirements in other nunneries, there can be little doubt that the more intelligent of Hildelith's nuns learnt to spell and write, to read the fathers and to compose Latin verse after the pattern of Aldhelm, who was the author of a hundred poetical enigmas. 'At a time', says Ten Brink, 'when Italian clergy no longer knew the rules of classic versification, English monks and bishops wrote, and English nuns read (and wrote) Latin verses beside which the verses produced elsewhere seemed almost as barbaric as they themselves beside the lines of a Virgil or a Horace.'[3] For many years the younger nuns at Barking had an instructress named Tortgith.[4] Bede seems to have made use of some chronicles of this house in which the acts of Ethelburga and Hildelith were recorded.

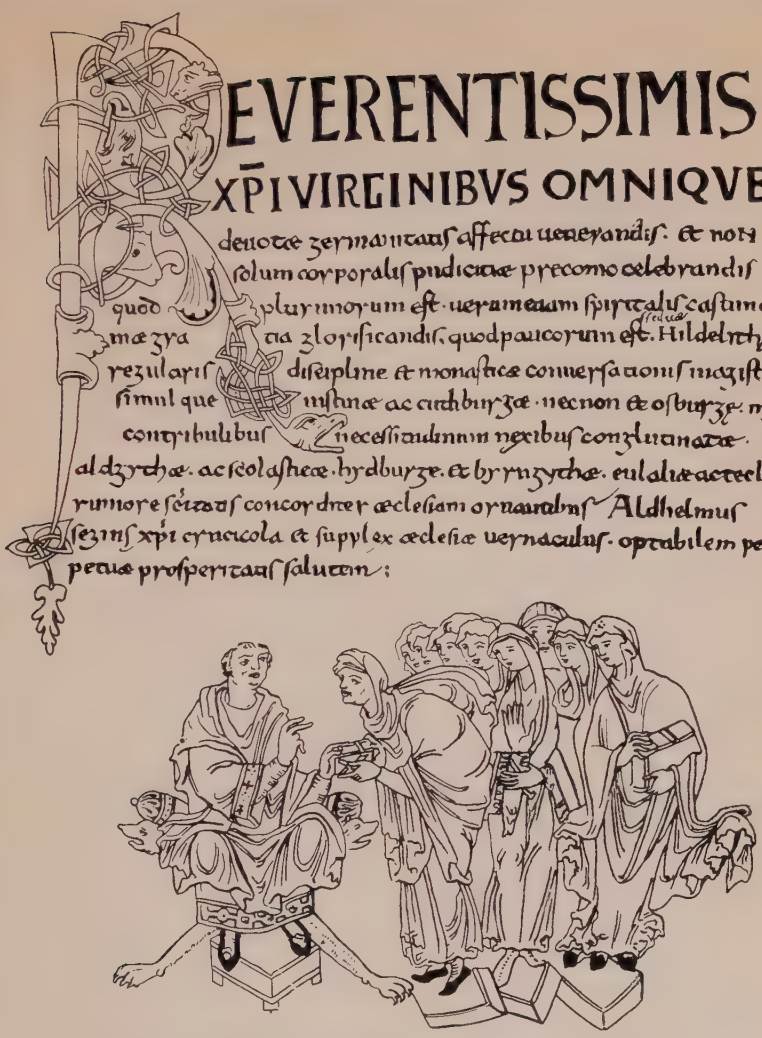
The West Saxon Group, which looked for inspiration to Winfrith (Boniface), is of even greater interest; the learning imparted to the nuns of Wimborne fitted them

[1] Frontispiece. Codex 200, fol. 68 b, Lambeth Palace Library (see plate on opposite page).

[2] Bateson, *Double Monasteries*, R. Hist. Soc. (N.S.), vol. xiii, p. 175.

[3] Ten Brink, *English Lit.*, vol. i, p. 34.

[4] Bede, Lib. IV, cap. ix (Plummer, p. 222).


EVERENTISSIMIS
XPI VIRGINIBVS OMNIQVE
deuotae germanitatis affectu ueneranda. et non
solum corporalis pudicitiae preconio celebranda
quod plurimorum est uera ac tuta spiritalis castimo
niae gratia glorificandis. quod pauorum est. Hildelithe
regularis disciplinae et monasticae conuersationis magistrae
simul que mistinae ac cuthburgae necnon et osburgae mihi
contribulibus necessitudinum negotiis conglutinatae.
aldgythae. ac sceolastecae hydburgae. et brungythae. cuilibet aecclesiae
rumore scitatus concorditer aecclesiam ornandam Aldhelmus
seruus xpi cruricola et supplex aecclesiae uernaculus. optabilem per
petuae prosperitatis salutem;

I. Hildelith, Abbess of Barking, and her nuns receive from Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborne, his treatise 'De Laudibus Virginitatis'

(After Codex 200 fol. 68 b. Lambeth Palace Library)

'The treatise describes the nunnery as a little world within the world, and compares the nuns' thoughts to a swarm of bees issuing from the hive to seek the honey of knowledge', p. 18

to go abroad and to become teachers of the heathen women of other lands. Cuthburga, sister of King Ina, the foundress and first Abbess of Wimborne, was a Latin scholar of Hildelith's school. Tetta, her successor, seems to have been as successful as Hild at Whitby in bringing out character and powers of initiative in those whom she instructed. One of her nuns, Eadburga, professed in early youth,[1] a lover of the niceties of scholarship who acted as mistress of the novices,[2] subsequently went to be Abbess of Minster. Like other Kentish abbesses, Eadburga was not wholly given to study and contemplation, but was an active administrator, busied over the acquisition of new property from king and noble to endow her house, bringing goods free of custom from overseas, buying ships and engaging in building operations at her convent.[3] Among Eadburga's pupils the most outstanding was Lioba (Leobgytha), a young kinswoman of Boniface, afterwards his fellow-worker in Thuringia, where she ruled the Abbey of Bischoffsheim and had charge of a number of girl converts. Certain letters of Eadburga, Lioba, and Boniface were fortunately preserved as models of style (although too often with the dates cut off),[4] by monastic houses abroad or by the foreign ecclesiastics to whom they were addressed. These letters display many traces of intellectual interests. The relation between Lioba and Boniface in particular recalls that of St. Jerome and his girl-pupils. Her eager enthusiasm, the freshness of a young mind, shines through the crabbed Latin: she is 'breathlessly desirous' of a few words from him, begs him to pardon the rusticity of her style, and to accept the copy of hexameters she has herself composed, as an exercise for her slender talent, under the direction of her mistress, who never ceases to turn into verse the mysteries of the Divine law.[5]

1 Jaffé, *Monumenta Moguntina*, Ep. 86, p. 234.
2 Ib., Ep. 23, p. 84.
3 De Gray Birch, *Cart. Saxon.*, vol. i, p. 253 (A.D. 748).
4 Savage, loc. cit., p. 259.
5 Boniface, Ep. xxi; Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, lxxxix, col. 720.

To Eadburga, in the calm of her Abbey at Minster, Boniface, exiled in the dark places of heathendom, turned for intellectual as well as spiritual companionship. The books she sends him are his solace. He begs her to complete her copy of the *Epistles of St. Peter*, written in gold to give honour to the Holy Scriptures, so that the words which originally inspired him may be ever before him in his journeyings.[1] Bishop Lul, his companion, desires to share in the correspondence and offers as presents, 'parva munuscula', a silver pen, and some cinnamon and storax.[2] At another time 'Bugga' (as she is often called in these letters) laments that she cannot beg or borrow for her friend a copy of the *Passiones Martyrum*, and sends him instead an altar-cloth.[3]

Other letters show the English abbesses corresponding in the universal language, Latin, with abbesses on the continent. Their apologies for rusticity and unpolished address are profuse, nevertheless they write with great ease, in a florid style. Among the formative influences affecting the nunneries they ruled, which their position enabled them to enjoy, the influence of foreign travel gave them cosmopolitan sympathies denied to other women. The chief goal of ambition, in spite of its perilous character, was a pilgrimage to Rome.[4]

For those who could not travel, a close intercourse with other English abbeys kept the stream of intellectual life from growing stagnant. A letter of Boniface to Eadburga before he left England, shows the exchange of spiritual experiences, by means of descriptive letters, between houses so widely sundered as Minster, Wenlock, and Barking.[5]

During the seventh and eighth centuries, the abbeys of Northumbria, Wessex, and Kent are those of whose intellectual activity most information remains to us—but

[1] Ep. xix, Migne, loc. cit., col. 712.
[2] Jaffé, *Monumenta Moguntina*, Ep. 75, p. 214.
[3] Ib., Ep. 16, p. 74.
[4] Cf. *Mon. Mog.*, Ep. 8, p. 49, and Ep. 88, p. 236.
[5] Ib., Ep. 10, p. 53.

traditions preserved in later lives of the women-saints suggest that houses in other parts of England were not entirely devoid of erudition. Guthlac devoted himself to learning under Ælfrid, Abbess of Repton.[1] St. Modwen, Abbess of Polesworth, who educated St. Edith, daughter of King Eadgar, is represented in an ancient picture with a book.[2]

4. *The First Palace-Schools*

Towards the close of the eighth century, court-education began to impinge on the province of the nunnery to train girls of royal and noble birth. In the women's cloister the eagerness even of religious learning had waned. In 747 the Council of Cloveshoe found it needful to remind the Church that the nunnery was for reading of books and singing of psalms, and that abbesses should compel all under their rule to be diligent students.[3] The influence of France, powerful at an early date to draw the Saxon princesses into the circle of religious life, was now being exercised in a new direction. Bede has the record of a Saxon boy, Iffi, Osric's son and Edwin's grandson, committed by his mother for safety to Dagobert, King of France, to be brought up at his court.[4] The practice of fosterage was one with which the Saxons were familiar, one they had doubtless brought with them into England from the Continent. In this respect the King's household set the example. The creation of a definite palace-school for the King's foster-family came about slowly in England; yet in France the palace-school owed

[1] Eckenstein, *Woman under Monasticism*, p. 108.

[2] Jameson, *Legends of the Monastic Orders*, p. 70. There is a pretty fourteenth-century legend of St. Osith, another of Modwen's pupils, whom her teacher had commended for a time to Edith's care. Edith's winter studies have brought her to the end of her own library, and she sends Osith to exchange one volume for a book of Modwen's. Osith is swept away by a flood, but saved by the prayers of the two saints, who go to the river-bank to look for her, and see her emerge from the water holding the precious book unharmed. (*Nova Legenda Angliae*, ed. C. Horstman, 1901, p. 232.)

[3] Haddan and Stubbs, vol. iii, p. 369 (art. 20).

[4] Bede, Lib. II, cap. xx (Plummer, p. 126).

its great reputation in the eighth century to the foremost of English scholars and teachers, Alcuin, who, about the year 782, was persuaded to enter the service of Charlemagne.

We have seen the leadership of English learning pass after the death of Bede from Jarrow to York; there it developed under the guidance of Egbert, Bede's old pupil, and of Ælbert, his successor in the primacy. At York Alcuin had under his care Ælbert's library;[1] his poem 'De Sanctis Eboracensis Ecclesiae' gives an idea of the range of learning in his master's school. A teacher of teachers, enthusiastic, patient, ingenious, farseeing, he had no sooner arrived in France than he set to work to train the Palace children on English lines. He instructed, side by side, the young princes and their sisters, the sons and daughters of the nobility, and with them some grown men and women, including Charles' sister, Gisela, Abbess of Chelles.[2]

Charlemagne was careful to provide his daughters with the same literary education as his sons, but to avoid the danger of sloth he ordered that the usual training in handicraft, wool-work, and the use of spindle and shuttle, should not be omitted.[3]

Moreover his interest was not confined to the upbringing of well-born children. In 789, from his palace at Aachen, he ordered the establishment of reading-schools for children both of servile and free status, and in each monastery and diocese the teaching of psalter, song, arithmetic, and grammar to all who sought instruction. This ordinance may have had some effect in the nunneries.[4] A few years later, in 797, Theodulf, Bishop of Orleans, revived ancient Canons of the Sixth Council of Constantinople, requiring parish priests to keep free schools in town and country, and to receive all pupils sent to them by the faithful, without any fee other than freewill

[1] Savage, p. 264.
[2] Jourdain, p. 87, and *Hist. Litt. de la France*, vol. iv, pp. 306–10.
[3] Jourdain, p. 86, from *Vita Karoli*, ed. Teulet, t. i, p. 64.
[4] Jourdain, p. 88.

offerings.[1] There seems good reason to believe that in some of the dioceses of France, for upwards of a century, girls asking for instruction in the elements were not refused. An edict of Riculphus, Bishop of Soissons, at the close of the ninth century, required them for the future to be excluded from boys' schools under his jurisdiction.[2]

There is no evidence that the School of York inherited the interest shown by the School of Northumbria in the learning of women—nor could Alcuin do for his fellow-countrywomen all that he had done for the French princesses. None of the monasteries for women destroyed by the Danes was restored, and those which carried on the Saxon tradition from the ninth to the sixteenth century were all, with the exception of Barking, Wessex houses.[3]

Alcuin died in 804. It is tempting to believe that the story of Charlemagne's educational activities which, through him, had reached England, was still an active tradition when Alfred, after the burning and ravaging of the Danes during some sixty years, began his great labours for the revival of education in his native land. The centre of study he now established in his own court followed in many respects the liberal lines of Charlemagne's palace-school; there, as under Alcuin, his youngest daughter, Ælfthryth, was bred up with her brother Edward, and taught by men and women teachers to be a lover and user of books and to repeat by rote the Psalms and Saxon books, especially Saxon poems, such as Alfred himself had learnt long since to recite at his mother's knee.[4] Nothing is recorded of the education of Æthelfled, the lady of Mercia, true daughter of Alfred's spirit; it can hardly have been less careful, and her interest in learning was sufficient to make her the foundress of the school attached to the collegiate church in Warwick.[5] Æthelgeofu, the third

[1] *Concilia Galliae*, ed. Jac. Sirmond, t. ii, p. 215; quoted Jourdain, p. 88.

[2] Ph. Labbé, *Sacrosancta Concilia de studio*, Paris, 1671, t. ix, p. 421; Jourdain, p. 88.

[3] Eckenstein, loc. cit., p. 202.

[4] Asser's *Life of Alfred*, ed. Stevenson, p. 31.

[5] Leach, *Educational Charters*, Introduction, xix.

daughter, followed an ancestral custom and entered a convent.[1]

5. *Tenth Century to the Conquest*

Among the violent contrasts of tumult and of peace, now invasion and massacre, now the upbuilding of convent walls, which mark the history of the tenth century, it is not a little surprising to catch faintly here and there indications that the instruction of women and girls was not entirely in abeyance.

Eadward the Elder kept alive in his own family the tradition of his father; his children were carefully educated, his eight daughters learning to love books, to weave and to spin. Eadburga, the elder daughter of Eadgifu, Eadward's second wife, took the veil when she was three years old.[2] At the same infant age, St. Edith, daughter of King Eadgar, was put to school, in Wilton Abbey,[3] and St. Wulfhild, daughter of Wulfhelm, learned with the nuns at Winchester.[4] Court and nunnery thus continued to share the upbringing of noble children. The royal princes apparently for two generations were educated by a governess of rank, Elfgifu or Ælfgiwa, whose influence in later life proved disastrous to Eadwig.[5]

Latin must still have been taught in the nunnery; an illustration used in Abbot Ælfric's grammar takes it for granted that nuns taught and girls learnt Latin: 'Ipsa monialis vigilat docendo puellas.'[6] When Dunstan saw in a vision in the Church of Saint Augustine at Canterbury the choirs of heavenly maidens, he seemed to hear them

[1] The chance of education was not confined merely to the royal circle. Alfred set apart a sixth of his revenue for the establishment of schools for boys of gentle and of humble birth. (Stevenson, loc. cit., p. 88.) We are not told, however, that any girls were admitted to these or that any schools for girls were also established.

[2] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, Lib. II, § 217 (Rolls, 90, vol. i, p. 268).

[3] Goscelin, *Life of St. Edith*; Migne, *Patrol Lat.*, clv, col. 111.

[4] *Lives of Women Saints*, ed. C. Horstman, E.E.T.S. 1886, p. 10.

[5] *Life of St. Dunstan*, Auctore Eadmero (Rolls, 63, p. 175).

[6] Somner, *Ælfrici Grammatica*, p. 28.

sing in alternating chorus a hymn of Sedulius, 'more humanarum virginum.'[1]

The revival of monastic life under Dunstan, Æthelwold, and Oswald affected nunnery as well as monastery and began to transform the old conditions, and to pave the way for a greater strictness. Æthelwold introduced the Benedictine Rule, unknown in the Saxon houses, into the nunnery at Winchester, and appointed Ætheldrith abbess.[2] King Eadgar established eight new nunneries, and placed them under the direction of Ælfthrith, his consort, bidding her imitate his efforts for the monks, 'that at every need she should help them.'[3] By his orders a translation of the Rule was made from Latin into English, a boon to the unlettered nun, but one which tended to make the study of Latin no longer essential.

Apart from the development of the religious community the period is marked by some definite steps in the direction of general education. The Canons of Eadgar (*c.* 960) plainly contemplate the elementary religious education of both sexes at the hands of the Church. It was certainly not the male children only, if they wished to lie in a hallowed grave, who required to learn at least the Creed and Pater Noster; 'he is not truly a Christian who will not learn them.'[4] Abbot Ælfric prepared about 994 a translation of the Capitulary of Theodulf of Orleans (797) already described.[5] Although by now little girls in parts of France had been shut out from the benefits of co-education which they appear at first to have enjoyed under its provisions,[6] we cannot immediately assume that this was the case in England. A century or two later, girls and boys certainly attended school together in some places, just as they did in France in the fourteenth century. Maiden-children could not

[1] *Life of St. Dunstan*, Auct. B. (Rolls, 63, p. 48).
[2] Cockayne, *Leechdoms*, iii, p. 414, Preface (Rolls, 35).
[3] Ib., p. 441.
[4] Leach, *Educational Charters*, p. 35, King Edgar's Canons, 22.
[5] De Montmorency, *State Intervention in English Education*, p. 9.
[6] Vid. *supra*, p. 22.

have been and were not allowed to lapse into heathendom; the interest of women in religion stands out clearly enough; there must have been provision for this, if for no other form of learning; and if religious teaching was usually given them in church, we cannot positively assert that they never in early years attended the priests' schools 'to be kept in the villages for free instruction'. The Saxon leechdoms of about this date select no less than five days in the month as propitious for first putting children to school[1] (cildra on scole betæcen), as though it were a widespread practice. The class to which the leechdoms relate would seem to be the freeman's child, not of noble birth.

Dunstan, an outstanding figure during all the central years, was one whose gifts gave him a natural sympathy for Christian womanhood. He befriended women in many ways; in his youth he assisted their artistic efforts; during his teaching days at Glastonbury, he taught those who were ignorant in the faith.[2] Abbot Ælfric's sermons are constantly addressed to an audience of both men and women—to a church 'which consists in maidens and in youths, in husbands and in wives'.[3] His lives of the Saints include the stories of women-saints, some of whom, like Saint Eugenia, are learned both in holy writ and worldly wisdom, and one, the favourite English girl-saint, Saint Agnes, goes to school.[4] There is little difficulty in accepting literally of his own day the Abbot's saying,

[1] Cockayne, loc. cit., pp. 185–93. Many writers regard the word 'cildra' as applying exclusively to boys. Where, as often in these ancient saws, boy and girl are spoken of in antithesis, the words used are 'cild' and 'mæden' respectively. But it is difficult to say dogmatically that in its collective use 'cildra' is applied only to the male sex; for instance, in such a saying as this: 'To see children and play with them betokens a happy time.' Boys are said to be 'gestæflaered', and 'gelæred stæfwis', that is, they know their letters; on the other hand, a maiden born on the seventeenth of the month is likely to be 'learned in words' as well as rich and handy at all things.

[2] *Life*, Auct. B., loc. cit., p. 50.

[3] Ælfric, *Homilies*, vol. ii, p. 567 (On the Nativity of Holy Virgins).

[4] Ælfric, *Lives of the Saints*, ed. Skeat, 1881, vol. i, Homily vii, p. 170. 'Þa ða heo gewende of scole ða awogode hi sum cniht.' His authority is St. Ambrosé.

'A man is taught by reading and a woman is taught by reading.' [1]

In spite of the institution of public schools for boys of good promise in the reign of Cnut, the chronicler records a general decay of learning among the clergy, and of necessity among their scholars, in the last years before the Conquest; even divine service was haltingly performed, and to understand grammar was a matter for wonder and astonishment.[2] Yet at the Court the old practices lingered on right up to the Conqueror's coming; Edith, wife of the Confessor, and Margaret of Scotland, his great niece, the daughter of Edward Outremer, who were the last of a long chain of Saxon princesses, are the mothers of book-loving royal ladies of the new era. Queen Margaret especially carried on the tradition of her race; herself of most pious and studious habit, a patroness of scholars, she carefully educated her children—with the constant help of the rod.[3] Lanfranc sent her, from England, Friar Goldwin and two monks 'to instruct her in the proper conduct of the service of God'.[4] King Malcolm, to mark his affection, ordered a copy of the Gospels, exquisitely illuminated, to be made for her use.[5] The books of saintly owners have adventurous lives. Hers, rescued by a miracle unhurt from the deep river into which, through the carelessness of a porter, it had fallen,[6] outlived her by some eight centuries, and is preserved to-day, a treasure of treasures, in the Bodleian Library.

6. *The Early Teaching of Embroidery*

Amongst our forefathers handicraft was distinguished from menial occupations such as cooking or grinding corn, which were the task of slaves. The reason for this distinc-

[1] Somner, *Ælfrici Gramm.*, p. 28. Ælfric, however, adapted his grammar from 'the larger and smaller Priscian'.

[2] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, Lib. III, § 245 (Rolls, 90, vol. 2, p. 304).

[3] *Life of St. Margaret*, Surtees Soc., vol. li, App., p. 240.

[4] Art. *D.N.B.*

[5] *Life of St. Margaret*, p. 241.

[6] Ib., p. 250.

tion was not solely the laborious character of the slave's occupation, but also the more honourable way in which traditional methods of spinning or weaving were imparted to the freeman's daughter. To the Saxon woman (some of whose work implements still preserved the Roman pattern)[1] her distaff and spindle were as much a glory as the weapons of war to her husband. King Alfred's Will speaks of the 'spindle-side' of the family as contrasted with the 'spear-side', the line of male descent.[2] The Church early took note of the woman's absorption in her needlework, and forbade her to occupy herself with weaving, sewing, or the preparation of wool and flax upon a Sunday, to the disregard of her religious duties.[3]

For generations needlecraft was the only recognized outlet for the artistic faculty where the artist was a woman, and while English mothers were giving birth to cathedral builders and craftsmen of marvellous ability, it is inconceivable that creative skill was confined to one sex. Examples of fine embroidery probably came into England at first from the east. The earliest references to the embroideress in these islands suggest that the art was practised among the Celtic inhabitants, before the Germanic invasion, and suggest also the influence of the Church; the Empress Helen, traditionally regarded as a British princess, works with her own hands now an altar cloth, now a figure of the Madonna;[4] St. Bride, after a legend preserved by William of Malmesbury, leaves her implements of needlework behind her at Glastonbury.[5] St. Winifred designs a chasuble for her tutor, St. Beuno.[6] Ornamental textiles were made very early in the convents of Northumbria, with their tradition of Irish culture.

[1] Wright, *Womankind in Western Europe*, 1869, p. 61.

[2] Ib., p. 60 (quoted from Thorpe's *Diplomatarium*, p. 491).

[3] Ib. (quoted from *Anc. Laws and Instit. of England*, ii, p. 45, Pœnitentials of Theodore of Canterbury).

[4] G. Rickert, *Romance of Emaré*, Introd., p. xxxvii, note.

[5] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, Lib. I, § 23 (Rolls, 90, vol. i, p. 27); 'relictis . . . textrilibus armis.'

[6] Fosbroke, *British Monasticism*, p. 17, and Horstman, *Nova Legenda*, vol. ii, p. 415.

The nuns of Coldingham (679) brought reproach upon themselves for setting on their looms garments suited to an earthly bridal;[1] the Council of Cloveshoe (747) pointed gravely to the convents where precious hours were wasted in weaving and making fine clothes.[2]

The word for embroideress, 'byrdicge', corresponding to the Latin plumaria (literally a female worker in feather, from the type of feather-tapestry practised among the Romans), is first found in an Old English Glossary of about the tenth century.[3]

The training of girls in handicraft, especially the craft of the needle, has thus a long past behind it, and to discover early traces of instruction in embroidery is no unimportant part of our study. The teaching of embroidery was not confined to the nunneries. The eight daughters of Eadward the Elder (by his successive marriages to Aelflæd and Eadgifu), who were trained at the Court of Winchester after the traditions of their grandfather, Alfred the Great, learned the use of the distaff and the needle, and spent their youth in the practice of these arts.[4] They may indeed have set stitches in the famous stole still preserved at Durham, 'woven in gold wire, with self-edged openings, for the insertion of figures of the prophets and letters in tapestry work,' which bears the inscription, 'Ælflæd caused it to be made for the pious Bishop Frithestan.' Æthelstan, son and successor to Eadward the Elder, gave this stole to serve as a wrapping for the body of St. Cuthbert, and when the Saint's grave was opened fragments of it were found.[5]

A noble Saxon lady, Æthelwynn by name, once asked Dunstan to her house to design a stole for use at Divine service, to be embroidered in gold and gems. There he found her sitting busily engaged amongst her work-

[1] Bede, Lib. IV, cap. xxiii (xxv) (Plummer, vol. i, p. 265).
[2] Haddan and Stubbs, vol. iii, p. 369 (art. 20).
[3] See *O. E. Vocs.*, Wright and Wülcker, 1884.
[4] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, Lib. II, § 126 (Rolls, 90, vol. i, p. 137.
[5] Liveing, *Records of Romsey Abbey*, p. 12.

women (operatrices).[1] A later writer, borrowing the incident from Dunstan's first biographer, substitutes for 'operatrices' the word 'puellulae'[2] and William of Malmesbury explains that the stole was to be embroidered by Æthelwynn's maidens.[3]

Another school or centre of young needlewomen was directed by Ælfwida, daughter of Leofled and Oswy, and granddaughter of Brithnoth, Alderman of Mercia.[4] In her we have an example of hereditary aptitudes; her grandmother Ædelflæd left to the monastery of Ely—together with certain lands and a torque of gold—a memorial curtain, upon which she had woven or worked the story of Britnoth's noble deeds,[5] while Ælfwida's sister, Leofwara, wife of Lustwin, gave, amongst other gifts to Ely, a tunic with border and shoulder-pieces worked in purple, crimson, and gold.[6] After the death of Leofled, Ælfwida, having no wish to marry, settled at Coveney, near the monastery of Ely, where she could occupy herself and a number of young girls, without interruption, in gold work and fine weaving; amongst other things she made, at her own expense, a white chasuble.

Unlike Æthelwynn all embroideresses did not seek an original design for their work. Designs gradually became stereotyped and were constantly repeated. A drawing made by an artist of repute would possess high value, and naturally would be used far and wide by needlewomen who could copy but not originate.[7] Design was, however, in some cases taught as an adjunct to embroidery. Edith, the daughter of Earl Godwin, had a very careful training in the art, including the knowledge of drawing, in the nunnery at Wilton; when she became the Queen of

[1] *Life of St. Dunstan*, Auctore B., p. 21, § 12 (Rolls, 63).
[2] Ib., Auctore Osberno, p. 80.
[3] Ib., Auctore Willelmo Malmesberiensi, p. 258.
[4] Gale, *Scriptores*, vol. i, p. 508, *Hist. Eliensis*, Lib. II, c. xxx (Oxford, 1691).
[5] Ib., p. 494, Lib. II, c. vii.
[6] Gale, vol. i, p. 508.
[7] Cf. Hartshorne, *Methods of Mediaeval Embroidery*, p. 59.

Edward the Confessor she kept up the interest of her youth. She took into her employment as embroideress Levid, who came from Dorsetshire—it may well be a pupil of the nuns of Shaftesbury—and her example still further encouraged a class of teachers on whose services a high value was set.[1] One such instructress, an unmarried woman by name Alwid, held at her disposal two hides in 'Tichessele Hundret' (now part of Ashendon Hundred) in Buckinghamshire, which Godric granted her for so long as he was Sheriff, on condition of her teaching his daughter embroidery.[2]

Queen Margaret (1045–93) carried into Scotland the tradition of the English Court. Although still a young girl when she married Malcolm III, she may well, like her sister Christina who subsequently became abbess, have received her early training in Romsey Abbey. Like all the women of her race she loved piety and needlework. Her chamber, says her biographer, Turgot, might truly be called a workshop of divine handicraft; there copes and chasubles, stoles, altar hangings, completed or still under the maker's hands, were to be seen, the achievement of women of noble birth and high character in whom she placed her confidence.[3]

Before the Conquest, the fair fame of Englishwomen for excellence in needlework and the weaving of gold tissue had found a record in William of Poitiers' Chronicle,[4] and the advent of Norman ladies, enthusiastic for the craft and eager to possess fine specimens, stimulated to further triumphs the English girl bending above her shining web. The Confessor's successors continued Levid in her employment, and drew others like her to their service; Queen Matilda left to the Church of the Holy

[1] Wright, loc. cit., p. 85: 'Haec Leviede fecit et facit aurifrisium regis et reginae. . . .'

[2] *V.C.H. Bucks.*, p. 258. Possibly she should be identified with Ælfwida of Coveney.

[3] *Life of S. Margaret*, loc. cit., p. 239.

[4] Duchesne, *Historiae Normannorum*, p. 211: 'Anglicae nationis feminae multum acu et auri textura egregie viri in omni valent artificio.'

Trinity at Caen a chasuble made by the wife of Alderet of Winchester, a chlamys gold-wrought which she had preserved in her chamber, and 'the vestment worked in England'.[1] The place of needlework in the education of English girls was thus established for centuries to come.

[1] Hartshorne, loc. cit., p. 85.

III

THE IDEAS OF CHIVALRY

1. *The Education in Courtesy*

THE 'gay saber', the gospel of chivalry, 'the discovery that life could be built upon love, that every knight and every lady must love and the highest glory of a man was to own the domination of a lady,' originated in Provence. It was the inspiration of a new refinement, born in kings' palaces, amid southern sunshine and joie-de-vivre, nourished to a system in the brains of southern poets and by them recommended in courtly verse. Gradually, no doubt in part through the intermingling of ideas brought about by the Crusades, the new gospel spread to northern France and to Normandy, those societies built up with such bewildering constituents of refinement and barbarism.

In England, where it was introduced by the Normans, and remained always an exotic, the conception of a dominant but alien race, the fashion of chivalry helped to bring about a distinct advance in the social estimation of women of good position. Echoes of its teaching were to be heard in the lower ranks of society centuries after their origin and real significance were forgotten.

What then of definite information survives, especially in our own country, about the upbringing of girls, to take their place in a milieu of confused ideas, in part savage, in part highly idealistic?

Where so much depended upon a woman's power to attract, it is little surprising to find young girls carefully prepared to conduct themselves with grace and charm on social occasions, taught table-manners, the rules of deportment in the presence of the great or at assemblies, how best to display natural advantages of face and form, how to address a stranger or welcome an honoured guest, how to give pleasure by song, dance, or instrumental music, yet without attracting unsuitable comment, the art of

conversation, the correctly modulated voice, modest composure of gesture and countenance.

The form of these conventions in many cases goes back to a far greater antiquity than the Courts of Provence. No very hard-and-fast line can be drawn between the rules they prescribe and those based on the instructions of the Fathers how a Christian woman should behave. Some points of etiquette are said to be of Arab origin in the era of the Crusades. Again it has to be remembered that in England, as elsewhere, the children of the great vassals for generations had been sent to the king's court, those of lesser vassals to the domestic circle, petty court, or castle of their overlord, in order to learn to be social beings, and a whole system of social obligations had thus grown up. As Thomasin of Zirclaria wrote, though in a more restricted sense, 'Virtue and courtliness come from long custom.'[1] The influence of chivalry quickened the social sense, and set the relation of men and women at a new angle; to it is due a certain shifting of stress which considered, for example, a modest demeanour and downcast eyes not so much a Christian duty as a means of enhancing a girl's attractiveness; it cast a glamour about much that had hitherto been matter of fact, and invested everyday conventions with a poetic halo.

Our knowledge of the chivalric upbringing is derived from two sources: firstly, early treatises on the subject of courtesy of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, of which examples remain compiled in France, Germany, and Italy; and, secondly, the reflection of courtly accomplishments, manners, and customs to be found in the Romances, whose heroines, belonging to no particular race or country, exemplify all that was held most attractive in a well-nurtured girl. Apart from questions of behaviour, the intellect was cultivated to some small extent, and handicraft, music, and physical culture formed part of the system.

It is impossible in this place to give any detailed account

[1] Heinrich Rueckert, *Der Wälsche Gast*, 1835, l. 653.

of the manuals of Gavin le Brun or Jacques d'Amiens, of *Der Winsbeke* and *Die Winsbekin*, written in Germany, of Guido de Colonna's *De Regimine Principum*, or the delightful *Reggimento delle Donne* of Barberino. No treatise on courtesy of such early date having its origin in England is now known to exist. The code of nurture reached us mainly by way of translations. English treatises for women, such as 'How the Good Wife taught her Daughter', contain echoes of chivalric ideas, lingering on in a different class atmosphere and at a much later period. Yet a practical knowledge of chivalric conventions came early into this country, and from the fountain-head, at latest with the marriage of Henry II and Eleanor of Poitou in 1152; not improbably it derived from the upbringing of Edward the Confessor at a foreign court, while the passion for poetry which inspired Matilda, wife of Henry I, made her a patroness of foreign minstrels. There can be little doubt that girls associated with the Anglo-Norman Court were taught something of 'gay saber'. Among the Novelle of Barberino is a tale of Messer Currado of the House of Savoy, who went to inspect a daughter of the King of England for his bride, but fell in love with, and married, Giogetta, another English girl, who was less beautiful, but 'insomma la meglio costumata fanciulla che mai si vedesse'.[1] At this period the nobility of England was essentially European in its conventions. The families of the nobility came and went between Normandy and England; in 1185, of the seven young daughters of Hawes of Windsor, a ward of Henry II, two were 'in transmarinis partibus', two were nuns, and three in England, their fortunes in the King's donation.[2]

2. *The Romances*

There is nothing more difficult to assess than the English contribution to the body of romances. On the whole the

[1] Barberino, *Reggimento delle Donne*, Pt. I, p. 37 ('By far the best-mannered maiden who ever was seen').

[2] Rotuli de dominabus et pueris et puellis. Stacey Grimaldi, London, 1830, p. 18.

tendency is to ascribe to native imagination the germ of numerous tales upon which French artists worked, which they expanded, adorned, and later gave back to England. There, just as the ornate manners of chivalry had been toned down, the tales were popularized to suit an audience of less exalted social position. In some cases the tale itself, like the Lays of Marie de France and Ipomedon, was written in England, although no less a hybrid between two modes of thought and expression.

Enough independent information remains to make us assured that in the girls of the Romances, who belong to every nation or to none, many traits of upbringing and accomplishment are indicated which reflect widespread usages of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Sometimes the English modification of a French original is in itself significant. For this special study Romances have been chosen which have some definite English association, the 'matière de Bretagne', tales which may first have sprung from the soil and were early and long popular with English readers.

The code of chivalric manners is set out in the books of courtesy with minuteness, prolixity, and little variation, whether the writer be Frenchman, German, or Italian; it reflects at times the counsels of the Fathers, at times those of Ovid, but holds before the pupil, when all directions have been closely followed, one final goal of ambition:

> Ele est de si bone acointance [1]
> Et de si bele contenance
> Que li sage bien entandant
> Qui del siecle sunt clerveant
> Ne sevent en li que blasmer;
> Ele est encor a marier.[1]

Let us take for granted that the heroines of the Romances

[1] 'She is so well informed and so fair of face, that the wise and understanding, who have foresight in the spirit of the age, know nothing blameworthy in her; she is now ready to be married;' quoted by Jacobius, *Die Erziehung des Edelfräuleins im Alten Frankreich*, p. 28, from Durmart le Galois, ll. 10693 et seq.

have studied and fulfil all the requirements of perfect manners, and devote our attention to questions of the intellect.

The fullest account of the teaching of very young children is found in the Romance of Floriz and Blauncheflur, a story ultimately of Oriental origin but already for a hundred years familiar on the Continent when it reached England in the thirteenth century.[1]

The English version approximates on the whole closely to the French.[2] This describes graphically the hero and heroine, already enamoured at five years old, going to school together, learning to read French, and also Latin books ('paienors')[3] on the subject of love, to speak Latin, so that people about them less well instructed cannot understand their sentimental remarks, to write on wax tablets, framed in ivory, with stiles of gold and silver, and also on parchment.[4] The English version is much more matter of fact and admirably suggests the little wilful prince:

> Al wepyng seide he
> Ne schal not Blancheflour lerne with me?
> Ne can y no3t to scole goone
> Without Blanchefloure . . .

Most of the sentiment, the gold stiles, and ivory tablets disappear, and we hear incidentally the kind of school—the song- and reading-school—an English boy and girl would have attended together, a modification of special interest:

> Ne can y in no scole *syng ne rede*
> Without Blancheflour . . .[5]

The children's education does not begin till seven and

[1] *Floriz and Blauncheflur*, E.E.T.S., O.S. 14 (1866), Introduction, p. xxxvii, § 3; cf. Rickert, *Early English Romances in Verse* (New Medieval Library. 1908), p. 178.

[2] Edèlestand du Méril, *Floire et Blanceflor*. Paris, 1856.

[3] Loc. cit., l. 214.

[4] Ib., l. 251 et seq.

[5] ll. 16–19, English version.

lasts for five years, by which time they know 'enough of Latin' and how to write neatly on parchment.

Later on when Floriz fails to forget Blancheflur, he is sent to his aunt in the land of 'Mountargis' who

> Set him to lore
> There as other children wore
> Both maydons and grome . . .

In spite of ecclesiastical prohibition, there can be no doubt that co-education in the elements of knowledge was a common practice in France. Froissart wrote of it from his own experience:

> Et quant on me mist à l'escole,
> Où les ignorans on escole,
> Il y avoit des pucellettes
> Qui de mon temps èrent jonettes;
> Et je, qui estoie puceaus,
> Je les servoie d'espinceaus,
> Ou d'une pomme ou d'une poire,
> Ou d'un seul anelet de voire;
> Et me sambloit au voir enquerre
> Grant proece à leur grasce acquerre . . .[1]

The English writer's modification to some degree strengthens the supposition that the song- and reading-school of the English village received both boy and girl pupils to learn their letters and the elements of the faith.

Usually the heroine of romance is a king's daughter, or a noble heiress under an obligation to prepare for the duties of her station.

[1] And when they put me to school
Where the ignorant are schooled,
There were little girls there
Who were playmates of my own age;
And I, a little boy,
I presented them with brooches,
With an apple or a pear
Or just a little glass ring;
And it seemed to me, if the truth be asked,
Great prowess to win their favour . . .

From *Poésies de Jean Froissart*, p. 184, *Le Trettie de l'Espinasse Amoureuse*, ed. J. A. Buchon, 1829, Coll[n] des Chron., t. x.

The prose Romance of Merlin describes the education of the fifth daughter of King Ygerne, who 'is yet at logres in gret bretein at scole, which lerneth wele and is right wise and connynge in gret clergye'.[1] A key-passage is Geoffrey of Monmouth's description of Helen, afterwards wife of the Emperor Constantine. Of her he writes:

'Pulchritudo ejus provinciales puellas superabat, nec uspiam reperiebatur altera quae in musicis instrumentis, sive in liberalibus artibus illa doctior censeretur. Caruerat pater altera sobole quae regni solio potiretur. Unde eam ita laboraverat docere ut regnum post patris obitum facilius tractare quiret.'[2]

The popularity of Geoffrey's book was astonishing. Alfred of Beverley[3] says 'to confess ignorance of it was the mark of a clown', and Helen may well be regarded as the prototype of many a learned heroine. But the question of most interest for ourselves is whether her author endowed her with the ordinary accomplishments of princesses of his day, or whether indeed he was handing on a lingering tradition of scholarship among earlier generations of noblewomen? The evidence deserves in passing a closer examination.

Next to Helen stands a group of heroines with a great reputation for learning who are all more or less closely associated with what, for convenience' sake, is called the cycle of the 'Outcast Wife': Constance, in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, is its best known representative. The genesis of this tale was undoubtedly in England; in the oldest of numerous versions the scene is laid in England, Scotland, or Wales; in the four earliest in Northumbria or Mercia.[4]

Of the versions either composed in England or of English origin, Trivet's, written in Anglo-French, *c.* 1258–1328, describes with most detail the heroine's studies. In his story Constance is the daughter of Tiberius Constan-

[1] *Merlin*, E.E.T.S., Part I, p. 121. Logres is London.

[2] *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. San Marte, Bk. V, ch. vi, p. 64.

[3] *Camb. Hist. of Eng. Lit.*, vol. i, p. 262.

[4] For a detailed study of the Constance Story by E. Rickert see *Modern Philology*, Jan. 1905, p. 55.

tine, and, being an only child, is carefully instructed in the Christian faith, and taught by learned masters the seven sciences, and how to speak different languages.[1] After a series of adventures she is driven ashore in her boat in England, and meets one Elda, the warden, a Saxon, to whom she replies in the Saxon tongue, one of those she had studied.[2] Chaucer, to whom the idea of a learned Constance was either unfamiliar or unacceptable, modified his original in this respect and merely says:

> A maner latyn corrupt was hir speche,
> But algates ther-by was she understonde.[3]

Gower omits all mention of her accomplishments. Yet other versions make Constance, when an outcast, adopt the calling of a teacher of youth. The story of Merelaus, the emperor, tells of her discovery in a wood by an Earl out hunting:

'The Erle trow'd she was some grete gentille woman and hadde of hire the more pite; and said to hire: "A! deere frend, thou semyst a gentille woman and dame. I have at home a litille childe to dowter and if thou wolt undirtake to norishe hire up and teche hire thou shalt be deliveryd fro this peyne and therto have good Reward." '[4]

In Hoccleve's version of the same story, entitled *The Emperor Jereslaus' Wife*, written about 1421, the earl says to the exiled empress:

> A yong doghtir I have in soothfastnesse
> Of which I wolde if thou list assente
> Thow tooke on thee to be gouverneresse
> And teche hire as longith to a Maistresse
> That lordes children have in governail.[5]

The heroine of a closely related story, the *Tale of Emare*, rendered from the French about 1400 in Yorkshire, is

[1] *Originals and Analogues* (Chaucer Society), *Life of Constance*, pp. 4, 5.
[2] Ib., pp. 12–13.
[3] Chaucer, *Man of Lawes Tale*, ed. Skeat, 1891, ll. 519–20, p. 15.
[4] *Life of Constance*, loc. cit., p. 57.
[5] Hoccleve's Works, *Minor Poems*, E.E.T.S., Extra Series, 61, p. 150, l. 295.

educated by a governess on more ordinary lines. She also is an only child, and motherless from early years:

> Or hyt kowthe speke or goo
> The chyld that was fayr and gent
> To a lady was hyt sente
> That men called Abro,[1]
> She thawghth [taught] hit curtesye and thewe,
> Gold and sylke for to sewe,
> Amonge maydenes moo.
> Abro tawghte thys mayden small
> Nortour that men usedenn in sale,
> Whyle she was in her bowre;
> She was curtays in all thynge,
> Both to old and to yynge,
> And whythe as lylye flowre . . .[2]

When, in later life, the usual misfortunes befall Emare, and she flies to the land of Galys, her rescuer, Sir Kador, takes her home

> to teche my chylderen curtesye
> In chambur wyth hem to bene . . .
> She tawghte hem to sewe and marke
> All maner of sylkyn werke . . .[3]

She proves highly efficient and receives a testimonial from her employer:

> She ys the Konnyngest wommon
> I trowe that be yn Crystendom
> Of werk that y have sene . . .[4]

Another learned heroine of this type is Le bone Florence of Rome, who was set to school to learn to read and to play the harp and psaltery.[5] The reputation for learning has, however, been transferred from tales of the

[1] *Romance of Emaré.* E. Rickert notes on this word (p. 34), '*Abro*, probably medieval Latin word for female servant, translated in fifteenth-century glosses, bowre-mayde, burwoman.'

[2] Ritson, vol. ii, p. 206, ll. 49 et seq.

[3] Ib., p. 220, ll. 373 et seq.

[4] Ib., p. 222, ll. 426 et seq.

[5] Ritson, vol. iii, p. 3.

Constance-cycle to others, independent of it, by an easy transition. It becomes a matter of course—the reader's right indeed—that an only daughter of royal or noble birth shall be well instructed. Felice la Belle, in Guy of Warwick, was learned in all the seven arts and in music, and was instructed by masters from Toulouse, white and hoar in wisdom.[1] The most outstanding example, however, is Melior, the heroine of Partonope, a romance which survives in a version of the fifteenth century, and probably originated in England, for its 'wild fables' are mentioned by Denis Pyramus, the Anglo-Norman poet and contemporary of Marie de France.[2]

Melior was a daughter of the Emperor Constantine, and again an only child.

> My fader had none heyre but me
> Of me therfore grete hede he toke
> And me to scoole anone dyd sett
> And grete Clerkis anone lete fett [fetch]
> To lerne me clergye and gret wysdoun
> That I myght the better governe the kingdom
> An hundereth maystres I had and moo
> And god yaff me grace to lerne soo
> That the Sevyn seyence I cowde perfytely . . .
> . . . After this I lernyd dyvynite
> Thre persones to know of the trynyte
> By than I was XV yere of Age
> My maystres that were bothe wyse and sage
> In alle the vyarse (? vij arts) I dyd hem passe . . .[3]

Melior's comprehensive education brings her into line with Constance and Helen, and ourselves again face to face with the original problem. Is there any special significance in this persistent ascription of remarkable learning to certain heroines of English writers? Miss Rickert has pointed out not only that the Constance romance, the story of the innocent persecuted wife, 'came to be

[1] *Guy of Warwick* (Auchinleck MS., ed. Zupitza), l. 79. In the French version the masters come from 'Tulette', i.e. Toledo.

[2] *Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey*, vol. iii (Rolls, 96, p. 138).

[3] *Partonope of Blois*, ed. W. E. Buckley for Roxburghe Club, ll. 3194 et seq.

influenced by some legend of Helen, mother of Constantine, perhaps through a confusion of Tiberius Constantine with Constantine the Great,[1] but also that it may have emerged originally from a mass of popular traditions about Offa, King of Mercia, and the romantic career of his daughter Eadburg.

It seems at least a possibility that, in the strange medley of truth and fiction, behind the romantic figures of Constance and Melior, Felice and the rest, may stand shadows of the Saxon princesses and abbesses, pupils of men 'white and hoar in wisdom'.

The education of Melior included a knowledge of medicine:

> After that lerned I
> To know of every herbe the vertue
> And eke of Rothis [roots] where ever they grew
> Whether they in kynde be colde or hote
> The maner of Spyces I know by rote
> How in phisike they have her worching
> The syeke in to heele I canne wele bring.[2]

There are few such explicit accounts, but indirectly we discover that many heroines of romance were skilled healers according to the science of their day. It is well known that there were women of repute in the School of Medicine at Salerno, and the names of several who received the title of Master have been preserved.[3] In a twelfth-century romance, the Lai des deux Amants of Marie de France, the Princess tells her lover that she has a rich aunt who has studied for the past thirty years at Salerno, and in that celebrated school completely acquired the art of medicine; she has learned so many salves and drugs, and studied so many herbs and roots, that she will certainly

[1] *Modern Philology*, June 1904, p. 54. There was a widespread tradition of Helen's skill as an embroideress. The heroines who are great embroideresses may well owe to her this trait. Cf. Emaré, Rickert, p. xxxvii, n. et seq.

[2] *Partonope*, ll. 3206 et seq.

[3] A. Kemp-Welch, *Of Six Mediaeval Women*, 1913, Introd., p. xiv, p. 43 note.

be able to compound electuaries to give the young aspirant the necessary vigour for the trials by means of which he may win his lady's hand.[1]

The romance of Ywaine and Gawin describes Ywaine sleeping under a tree when a lady comes riding by with her two 'bour-wemen'. She sees the wound in the knight's face, and how he is distraught with sorrow, and hastens home to find a specific for frenzy, a box of ointment 'ful dere' given her by Morgan the wise.[2] On another occasion Ywaine, wounded in his fight with a giant, is healed at a fair castle by

> Twa maydens
> That wele war lered of leche-craft,
> The lordes doghters both thai wore . . .;

His lion also is restored to health by their ministrations.[3]

In the Thornton Romances, Dawntoure, the emperor's daughter, nurses the wounded Eglamour a twelve-month in her bower.[4] The late romance of Sir Eger, Sir Grahame, and Sir Gray Steel, popular in the sixteenth century, carries on an old tradition in relating the care bestowed by Lillias and her maids on Sir Eger wounded in battle:

> She and her maids, those ladies three
> Of all my gear they spoiled me
> Both of mine hauberk and mine actown
> Washed me syn and laid me down;
> With her own hands, white as the milk,
> She stopped my wounds full of silk
> And syn laid me into a bed
> That was with silken sheets spread . . .[5]

It was an easy transition in medieval times from the knowledge of medicine to the knowledge of spells and

[1] *Early Eng. Metrical Romances*, ed. Ellis, p. 52.
[2] Ritson, *Anc. Engl. Metrical Romances*, vol. i, p. 72 et seq.
[3] Ib., p. 115, ll. 2733 et seq.
[4] *Thornton Romances*, Camd. Soc., 1844, *Romance of Sir Eglamour d'Artois*, p. 153.
[5] Ellis, loc. cit., p. 550.

II. TOBIT'S WIFE COMPOUNDS HIS REMEDY FROM A BOOK OF MEDICINE ON HER KNEE

From Comestor, Historia Scholastica, MS. Reg. 15. D.I. British Museum

'In the fourteenth century Elizabeth, Countess of Salisbury, owned a copy of the Historia Scholastica taken from King John of France at the Battle of Poitiers', p. 112. 'Many heroines of romance were skilled healers according to the science of their day', p. 43

enchantment, and accordingly the education of Melior extended after she was fifteen into the realm of magic:

> Thanne to nigromauncy sett I was
> Thanne I lernyd enchauntements
> To know the craft of experyments . . .[1]

These experiments she worked privily in her own chamber, sometimes, for the Emperor's amusement, playing at craft with her masters; the moon would grow 'in largenesse a myle aboute'; the sun would shine at midnight as on a summer's day; armed knights would appear on horseback ready to fight:

> After that I made come a lyoun
> The Olifaunte also and else the Greffoun
> And alle maner of beestis whiles I wolde . . .[2]

Though the castle was full of people she could make each unaware that he was not alone.

In the same way Merlin educated Nimue in magic and she carefully wrote down his directions.[3] Another apt pupil of the magician was Arthur's sister:

'A yonge damesell fressh and jolye . . . she was a noble clergesse and of Astronomye cowde she i-nough, for Merlin hadde hir taught; and after he lerned hir i-nough . . . so moche she sette theron hir entent and lerned so moche of egramauncye that the peple cleped hir . . . Morgain le fee . . .[4]

Morgan had other more ordinary accomplishments to recommend her: she was eloquent and a fine singer, and above all 'the beste workewoman with hir handes that eny man knewe in eny londe'. She is found in one scene working silk and gold 'in a wardrope, under the paleys' to make a coif for her sister, King Lot's wife, and her knightly visitor sits down beside her to help 'wynde the threde of golde'.

Apart from these rather sinister maidens, who received

[1] *Partonope*, loc. cit., ll. 3223 et seq.
[2] Ib., ll. 3252–5.
[3] *Merlin*, E.E.T.S., Pt. III, p. 418.
[4] Ib., pp. 507–8.

a training something between a clerk's and a witch's, the girls of the Arthurian Romances possess 'maners might no man amend'; they send frequent messages in letters of their own penmanship, which are usually written on parchment, when it can be obtained, and fastened with a pin, or sewed,[1] and they read sometimes, in their hours of grief, from golden psalters, sometimes from books of romance.

Others are fine musicians; they play various instruments, accompanying the voice. In the Squire of Low Degree, the King of Hungre says to his daughter as she bemoans her love:

> Ye were wont to harpe and syng
> And be the meriest in chambre comying.[2]

Persewysse, in Partonope of Blois,[3] and Myldore, in Sir Degrevant, are also skilled performers on the harp.[4] At feasts the maidens sing carols and dance. Upon King Arthur's coming to the castle where dwelt Sir Ywaine and the fair Alundyne:

> Thar was gret joy; yow bihete, [I promise you]
> With clothes spred in ilka strete
> And damysels danceand ful wele
> With trompes, pipes and with fristele,
> The castel and cete rang
> With mynstralis and nobil sang . . .[5]

Speaking generally, the romances depict a joyful leisurely existence, for which the most suitable training made of a girl a social being, and drew out those gifts which could help her to add charm and brilliance to the society in which she moved; her best teacher was a woman of the world. The whole position is delightfully summed up in a passage from Le Roman de Galerent, a story borrowed at the end of the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth

[1] Ellis, loc. cit., p. 444.
[2] Ritson, vol. iii, p. 176.
[3] *Partonope*, l. 4661.
[4] *Thornton Romances*, Camd. Soc., 1844, *Sir Degrevant*, p. 236, l. 1417.
[5] Ritson, vol. i, p. 59.

century from the Lai le Fresne of Marie de France, which was probably written in England. Fresne, being a foundling, is educated in a convent and discussing her future career with the abbess she says:

Si je suis povre et foible et lasse
Je ne suis mie de cuer basse,
Car basseté de petit cuer
Met souvent fame a petit fuer,
Et qui chace oisel oisel prent.
Mon cuer madame si m'aprent
Que je ne face aultre mestier
Le jour fors lire mon saultier
Et faire euvre d'or ou de soie,
Oyr de Thebes ou de Troye
Et en ma herpe lays noter
Et aux eschez autruy mater
Ou mon oisel sur mon poign pestre.
Souvent ouy dire a mon maistre
Que tel us vient de gentillesse . . .[1]

[1] ll. 3874 et seq.:

If I am poor, feeble and languid,
I am not mean-spirited;
For a little heart that is mean
Often brings a woman to do a petty thing,
And whoso chases a bird catches a bird.
My heart, Madame, teaches me this,
To perform no other task in the day
Save to read my psalter,
And to broider in gold or silk,
To hear about Thebes or Troy
And to sound lays on my harp,
And to checkmate some one at chess
Or to strike my bird on my wrist.

Often I have heard my master say
Such an usage cometh of gentle breeding.

From *Le Roman de Galerent, Comte de Bretagne*, Renaut, ed. A. Boucherie, 1888.

IV

FROM THE CONQUEST TO THE BLACK DEATH

PART I

1. *Introductory*

THE picture which the romancers presented of a girl's upbringing in the ages of chivalry must now be compared with the historic fact; and Melior and Iseult, Blanchefleur and Constance be confronted with the queen, the court-damsel, the poetess of real life.

From the close of the twelfth century some modification in the way in which girls were brought up resulted from new institutions, from new usages and habits in the upper classes of society. The education of priest and scholar, and with it of boy-learners of every grade, was being profoundly affected by the growth of the universities, which drew the youth of almost every European country away from the ancient monastic centres of learning to Paris or to Oxford. The convents of women, as we have seen, had not been wholly outside the old ranges of polite learning; for centuries to come they were to remain outside the new.

The religious houses of men had usually stood to those of women in the relation of guide and pupil in matters of the intellect; now the leader passed on into new fields, but the disciple was not invited to follow. The result was inevitable. Among the nuns, 'learning', that is, the study of Latin, steadily decayed: the habit and talent of Latin verse-composition, in which the Saxon abbesses had schooled themselves, gradually disappeared. Fragments of Latin verse are no longer found to give distinction to the Rouleaux des Morts, which emanated from the nunnery as well as from the monks' cloister.[1] More and more the

[1] A Bede Roll of the twelfth century issued by Agnes, Abbess of Hedingham, is extant, written in Gothic characters. *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *Fifth Report*, p. 321 (Majendie Collection).

nun fell into the rear, following instead of leading the intellectual movements of her countrywomen.

The type of training given in the feudal castle, which produced the lady of the chase, the tourney and the court of love, was, in a sense, mundane and tended towards the cultivation of the imagination and emotions rather than of the intellect; its scholars were destined to become women of the world who should charm a social circle. They had no dread of the attractions of the world or the enjoyment of the senses; they loved and practised poetry, music and song: above all, they were patronesses of the romance-writer. The power of the romantic tale to awaken a profound sympathy in the woman-reader is a constant subject of remark. Chaucer's ballads were made for her worship and instruction; it was she who held in 'ful gret reverence' the tale of Lancelot, and would chide the poet for the unfaithfulness of Cressida. Thus the chains of a gentle servitude of the imagination through all these centuries were being rivetted upon a host of willing slaves. The girl of Chrétien's Story of the Lion, sitting under the boughs with a book of romance upon her knee, is a symbol of generations of women in a world of very harsh reality. Even the sphere of religious literature was touched by this magic, and yielded, to supplement the sterner writings of fathers of the Church, the tales of women-saints and long-drawn hymns of Mary, the Queen of Heaven.

The old cramping ideas of safety in restraint, the old overwhelming conviction of an innate impurity, did not disappear, but they were now not unvisited by the new conception of human love. Even in writing for religious women the language of Chivalry was employed to frame the Divine vision.

While the instruments of education were thus on the whole tempered and refined, the accepted type of teacher was still concerned with imparting moral to the neglect of intellectual training. In theory she remained a bulwark against the new worldliness; she might even be a

disappointed, disillusioned woman, with a past unforgotten if bitterly repented, to make her a safe counsellor for unwary youth.

In the scanty material which now awaits our study we shall find embodied many of the ideas to which the romances give expression. The conviction bears fruit that queens and those responsible for government must be prepared for the duties of their station. We shall find also, in a kindlier atmosphere, the artistic sense developing, even putting forth blossom, and become aware of a heightened sense of personality. The encouragement of religious profession in very early youth militated against the development of a strong originality within convent walls; Marie de France probably composed her most characteristic poems before she took monastic vows.

As the study of Latin decayed, in England the vernacular was not yet at a stage to take literary shape. The use of courtly French, at first as a practical necessity, and later for the love of a fair language, was undoubtedly of educational value to English women. The study charmed and interested them, even perhaps ministered to their natural vanity. A reflection of this satisfaction in the use of a foreign tongue is to be recognized in Chaucer's Prioress and in the earlier tale of Blonde of Oxford. Languages, literature, music, all in embryo, are thus already to be found. Encouragement to study the elements of medicine served to develop a natural instinct of helpfulness towards those distressed.

On the whole, slender and lacking in depth as were the acquirements of the ages of chivalry, they tended to unfold the emotional and artistic nature of a girl to a degree that undoubtedly ministered to her happiness.

2. *The Maiden-Child and her Teacher*

The child, the girl-child especially, is but very dimly realized in early literature. Here and there are isolated passages, occasionally whole poems, which suggest that childhood had its charm for our forefathers, if a charm

III. CHRISTINE DE PISAN (1363–*c.* 1429) AT WORK IN HER STUDY
From MS. Harl. 4431, British Museum

'Through the Earl of Salisbury the English Court came into touch with the noble Christine de Pisan, scholar and poetess and protagonist of intellectual liberty for women', p. 99

tempered with dread of the inborn perverseness of young humanity.

Le Livre des Manières of Étienne de Fougères, chaplain at the Court of Henry II and Bishop of Rennes (1168–73), which denounces feminine depravity, and is as yet untouched by the glamour of chivalry, discusses the advantage of possessing children, so long as they are well-behaved:

> Bon sunt li effant a aveir
> Quant il unt et sen e saveir.

Father and mother are overjoyed when the young ones kiss and salute them; they toil and moil for them, borrow for them, build castles, besiege castles, but when all is done—the children die.[1]

The Pearl again is a beautiful description of a father's affection for the infant daughter he has lost, couched in the terms of chivalry. The little thing died before her second birthday; Creed and Paternoster had never passed her lips, yet already in his dream he sees her reigning, a fellow-queen in the Court of Heaven with Mary herself, the Queen of Courtesy; it is more bliss than he can fathom:

> Of countes, damysel, par ma fay
> Wer fayr in heven to halde astate
> Other ellez a lady of lasse aray,
> Bot a quen, hit is to dere a date . . .[2]

There is an exquisite description in the *Ancren Riwle* of a mother playing with her 'young darling'. She flies from him and hides herself; she lets him sit alone and look anxiously around and call Dame! Dame! and weep awhile. Then she leaps forth laughing, with outspread arms, embraces him and dries his tears.[3] In the 'Ureisun of oure

[1] *Le Livre des Manières par Étienne de Fougères*, ed. F. Talbert, p. 46, ll. 1189 et seq. 'Children are good to have when they possess sense and knowledge.'

[2] *The Pearl*, Early Eng. Allit. Poetry, ed. Morris, E.E.T.S., 1864.

[3] *Ancren Riwle*, Camd. Soc., 1853, p. 231.

Louerde' at about the same date, a very similar passage occurs.[1]

Finally, the latest of this early series of portraits in which the natural sympathy of the English for childhood finds its way past medieval and cloistral severity, there is the description in *Ratis Raving*, a northern poem, of a child's playthings, and especially of the little girl who can make:

> A cumly lady of a clout
> And be rycht besy thar about
> To dicht it fetisly with flouris. . . .[2]

A woman's natural love of children is fully appreciated, and there is much pathos in the strenuous efforts made in monkish manuals of instruction like *Hali Meidenhad*, to depreciate motherhood, enlarge upon its anxieties, and to paint for the cloistered nun the joys of a spiritual maternity: 'If thou desirest children, thou shalt bring forth daughters and sons of spiritual virtues, that never can die, but ever play before thee in heaven.'[3]

Early references to the teachers of childhood very rarely occur. Royal and noble children were taught by a tutor, usually a cleric, or, in the case of girls, more probably by a resident governess. A lady who educated the children of Herbert de Furcis in the reign of Stephen, finds a place in the letters of Osbert de Clare on account of her remarkable piety.[4] At a later time Chaucer and the poets of his school have many references to these duennas. Chaucer especially, in *The Phisiciens Tale*, describes the qualifications to be desired in those responsible for girls' upbringing in manners and morals, and addresses them with such great earnestness that some writers have thought he had in mind the teachers of his own motherless children:[5]

[1] *O. E. Homilies*, ed. R. Morris, E.E.T.S., 29, p. 183.
[2] *Ratis Raving*, Bk. I, p. 57, ll. 1985 et seq.
[3] *Hali Meidenhad*, ed. F. J. Furnivall, E.E.T.S., 1922.
[4] *Osberti de Clara Epistolae*, Caxton Society, 1846, p. 175:'quaedam matrona quae liberos ejus educare consueverat.'
[5] Ten Brink, *Eng. Lit.*, vol. ii, p. 121.

And ye maistresses in your olde lyf,
That lordes doghtres han in governaunce,
Ne taketh of my wordes no displesaunce;
Thenketh that ye ben set in governinges
Of lordes doghtres, only for two thinges;
Outher for ye han kept your honestee,
Or elles ye han falle in freletee,
And knowen wel y-nough the olde daunce,
And han forsaken fully swich meschaunce
For evermo; therfore, for Cristes sake,
To teche hem vertu loke that ye ne slake . . .
Of alle tresons sovereyn pestilence
Is whan a wight bitrayseth innocence.[1]

The idea that the safest guardian of a girl's innocence was one who had herself fallen and repented of her fault is a melancholy commentary on the moral standards of the day. Chaucer's 'maistresses' are the direct descendants of the companion 'gravis, pallens, sordidata, subtristis' approved of St. Jerome.

3. *Daughters of King and Noble*

Throughout these centuries the example and influence of the Queens of England and the ladies of the Court are important factors in the history of education.

An admirable link between Saxon and Norman times, between romance and reality, is found in Edith, daughter of Earl Godwin, wife of Edward the Confessor, she who so far belied her parentage that a proverb gained currency in England and France:

Sicut spina rosam
Genuit Godwinis Editham.[2]

One can even follow the historic steps by which she passed from schooldays in the convent at Winchester to a seat beside the queens of story. Ailred of Rievaulx (d. 1166) in his Life of the Confessor, describes her girlish

[1] Chaucer, *The Phisiciens Tale*, ed. Skeat, ll. 72 et seq. (Student's Chaucer, p. 552).
[2] *Life of S. Edward the Confessor* (Rolls, 3, p. 58, l. 1175)

love of retirement; she spent her time alone, in reading and weaving silk and gold thread and embroidery of elaborate design.[1] William of Malmesbury, writing about her marriage, speaks with appreciation of her learning,[2] and of the festal robe, interwoven with gold, which she made for the king.[3] A century later, in a French poem dedicated to Eleanor of Provence, queen of Henry III, these descriptions are expanded into the portrait of a well-bred girl of the day, 'd'afaitement endoctrinée', possessing great good sense in literature and in everything to which she devoted attention, wise and eloquent, but above all renowned for her skill in needlework:

D'entaille et de purtraiture,
D'or e argent brudure,
Tant fist verais popres e beaus
U d'agoille u de taveus,
Hummes, oiseus, bestes e flurs;
E tant parti ben ses culurs,
E de autre overe riche e noble,
N'out per gesk'en Costantinoble.[4]

The ladies of the Norman royal house were, like their Saxon predecessors, educated according to the best traditions of the age. Cecilia, the eldest daughter of William the Conqueror and Matilda of Flanders, was brought up in the Abbey of the Holy Trinity at Caen, and subsequently succeeded to the abbess's office. She received lessons in Grammar from Arnoul Mauclere, afterwards

[1] Ailred of Rievaulx, *Vita S. Edwardi Regis* (Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, vol. 195, col. 747).

[2] William of Malmesbury, Lib. II, § 197 (Rolls, 90, vol. i, p. 239).

[3] Ib., § 220, p. 271.

[4] In engraving and in portraiture,
In gold and silver broidery,
She made so many true, appropriate and beautiful,
Either in needlework or patchwork,
Men, birds, beasts and flowers:
And so well did she divide her colours,
And in other rich and noble work,
She had no equal as far as Constantinople.

Life, loc. cit., p. 58, ll. 1160 et seq., and translation, p. 212, and see also Gale, *Rerum Anglic. Scriptores*, vol. i, p. 62, for a story showing Edith's knowledge of grammar and logic.

Patriarch of Constantinople,[1] and Baudri, Bishop of Dol, composed an ode, congratulating her upon her learning. Adela, Countess of Blois, surpassed her sisters in her acquirements: Baudri says that she loved verses and knew how to praise them with discrimination, even to write them herself. She too could read Latin, and there is a tradition preserved in the history of Hugo a St. Maria that she knew Greek as well.[2] Round her bedchamber hung a gorgeous tapestry, a weft of gold, silver and silken threads studded with gems, representing in a lifelike manner her father's achievements in the conquest of England.[3]

A more interesting figure, reminding us of the early patronage of poetic literature by English queens, is Matilda, consort of Henry I and daughter of Malcolm III, King of Scotland. Matilda was brought up among the nuns of Wilton and Romsey, by her aunt, the Abbess Christina; under the abbatial rod the young princess trembled, but there was more than mere courtly flattery in the chronicler's remark that the nuns taught her not only the art of good manners but some knowledge of good literature. A correspondence in Latin, with Pope Paschal II, and with St. Anselm, on subjects relating to her religious observances, written in a florid perfervid style recalling that of the Saxon abbesses, is ascribed to her. If one may take its statements literally, not as a mere rhetorical flourish, she was acquainted with more than one of Cicero's works, and had read other Latin authors likely to be found in a convent library. Above all she had a passion for poetry, and exercised towards 'clerks of melodious voice' a lavish generosity which drew scholars from overseas to compete eagerly for her favour by the charm and novelty of their compositions.[4]

[1] Jourdain, loc. cit., p. 101.

[2] Wood, *Lives of Princesses of England*, vol. i, pp. 40–1. Quoted from Reusner, *Basilikon Genealogici Stirpes* (*Britannicae*), 1592, Pt. IV, p. 7.

[3] Baudri, p. 194.

[4] *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, Lib. V, § 418 (Rolls, 90, vol. 2, p. 493).

Adelaiz of Louvain, the second queen of Henry I and the correspondent of Hildebert of Tours,[1] if less brilliant, was still a patroness of poets; it may have been to console her widowhood that the Anglo-Norman poet David wrote his lost epic of the king's exploits;[2] she was the protector also of Philippe de Than, whose Bestiary is dedicated to her.[3]

By the marriage of Henry II with Eleanor of Aquitaine the ladies of the English Court were again brought into touch with a standard of literary taste and habits of thought which they were not slow to adopt; Eleanor was grand-daughter of the first known of the Troubadours, William IX, Count of Poitiers. 'Her court,' says Mr. Chaytor, 'was the chief centre whence Provençal influence spread to the poets of northern France;' her daughter, Marie de Champagne, encouraged the adoption of the code of chivalry.[4] Matthew Paris describes the presence of 'joculatores' at Eleanor's wedding feast and Bernart de Ventadorn one of her vassals, possibly even Chrétien de Troyes, may have been among the guests at the marriage of so ardent a patroness of poets and singers.[5] Layamon says that 'Wace gave his book to the noble Eleanor who was the high King Henry's queen'.[6] On the death of Henry II she took an active share in the government, especially during the Crusade and imprisonment of Richard I. Letters have been preserved, written in Latin, by her or on her behalf, to the Pope, the Emperor, and Prince John, endeavouring to obtain her son's release.[7]

The royal tastes were shared by ladies of noble rank, even in the remoter parts of England. Lincolnshire was one such centre; at some time before the death of good queen Adelaiz (1151) we hear of a lady sufficiently

[1] Jourdain, loc. cit., p. 91.
[2] Gaimar, *L'Estorie des Engles*, Rolls, 91, vol. ii, pp. 204, 207, &c.
[3] *Hist. litt.*, t. xiii, p. 60.
[4] Chaytor, *The Troubadours in England*, p. 35.
[5] Chaytor, *loc. cit.*, pp. 36–7.
[6] *Camb. Hist. of Eng. Lit.*, vol. i, p. 264.
[7] Rymer, *Foed.* i, Letters 23, 24, 25.

educated to have some appreciation of the importance of history, and to love poetry. Dame Custance was the wife of Ralph FitzGilbert, probably to be identified with one of the name, a benefactor of Kirkstead Abbey, who held the lordship of the town of Seampton. At her request Geoffrey Gaimar, a Norman cleric, not improbably the chaplain in her household, translated his 'Estorie des Engles'. He made use of many authorities and could never, he says, have finished his task but for the help Dame Custance gave him in procuring 'English books, and books on grammar both in French and Latin'. Especially she sent to Helmsley to borrow a book 'of the Welsh about British Kings', which Walter 'Espec' (the Woodpecker), Archdeacon of Oxford, had lent to her husband. She had also at least one book of her own, a much-prized volume, a metrical history, in part set to notes for singing, which she often read in her chamber, and had paid for with a mark of gold burnt and weighed. This was the poem aforenamed, written by David at the request of Adelaiz of Louvain.[1] Dame Custance's knowledge of the Queen's book would seem to be a direct outcome of courtly influence.

Another member of the Lincolnshire group was Adélaïde de Condé, wife of Osbert de Condé, lord of Horncastle; in the reign of Stephen she employed the trouvère Samson de Nanteuil, who calls her his lady, to translate the Proverbs of Solomon into French verse.[2]

4. *Marie de France and the Literary Influence of Women*

Another personality of outstanding interest at the Court of Henry II, indeed the exemplar of chivalric education in England, was the poetess, Marie de France. Recent research has established the very strong probability that she is to be identified with Mary, Abbess of Shaftesbury, a natural sister of Henry II and daughter of Geoffrey

[1] Gaimar, Rolls, 91, vol. ii, pp. 203 et seq.
[2] *Hist. litt.*, t. xiii, p. 62.

Plantagenet, Count of Anjou.[1] If the identification be correct, it establishes Marie de France as the earliest among women-poets of England; it has long been recognized that most of her verses were composed in this country. Glimpses of her personality, generous, painstaking, affectionate, shine out here and there in her poems and have a distinct, a pathetic charm. In a history of education she occupies a remarkable place; highly educated for those times—yet it is noticeable that her contemporaries found her writings more worthy of remark, more unusual, than her learning—she had a good knowledge of English and Latin, as well as of her native French. She must in all probability have received her training in a convent, either in France or in England, like Fresne the heroine of her own Lay of the Ash-Tree, an 'unwanted' child of gentle birth.[2]

As a writer Marie took her calling with great earnestness, and achieved no little measure of success. 'One who is treating of good matter', she explains in 'Guigemar', 'is troubled if it be not well done; hearken lords to Marie, who uses her time as well as she may.'[3]

Her Lais approximate more nearly than the Chansons de Geste to the fairy story; they are far more refined, and preserve much of the imaginative charm of those Breton folk-tales to which the authoress turned for inspiration. Others of her writings are *The Fables*, which she rendered from English into French to please Count William Longespee, and the *Purgatory of St. Patrick*, which she translated from the Latin 'for the convenience of lay folk'—a phrase which a religious might be expected to employ.

Her works, especially the Lais and the Fables, hit off exactly the taste of her day; they were so popular—for more than a century after her death copied and recopied,

[1] See for discussion of evidence, articles by J. C. Fox, *English Review*, 1911, vol. xxvi, p. 317, and vol. xxv, p. 303.

[2] *Seven Lais of Marie de France*, ed. E. Rickert, *Lai le Fresne*, pp. 41, 43. Fresne was taken to 'an exceeding rich and well-appointed abbey'—'There', says the authoress, 'as I know well . . . the Abbess had her well-instructed.'

[3] Rickert, loc. cit., p. 7.

and even translated into Norse—that they enable us to gauge the kind of imaginative writing in which English men and women delighted.

E si en est ele mult loee,
E la ryme par tut amee.
Kar mult l'ayment si l'unt mult cher
Cunt, barun e chivaler
E si en ayment mult lescrit
E lire le funt, si unt delit
E si les funt sovent recreire;
Les lays soleient as dames pleire.
De joye les oyent e de gre
Quil sunt sulum lur volente.[1]

So wrote Denis Pyramus, probably about five and twenty years after Marie had ceased to sing—whole-hearted praise of a fellow-poet when there was no longer anything to be gained by gratifying king or court.

Occasionally in Marie's poems there are hints of the books she knew; now Priscian, now Ovid, now the well-loved story of Tristrem and the Queen; of her fondness also for music, as when she writes delightedly, of some lay made by the Bretons 'for remembrance,' 'Folk tell it to the harp and to the rote and the music of it is sweet to hear,'[2] or again of the Queen's singing, low-voiced, such as all delighted in:

La reine chante doucement,
La voiz accorde a l'estrument,
Les mains sont belles, li lais bons,
Douce la voiz et bas li tons.[3]

1 So is she much praised for (her poetry),
And the rhyme beloved by all,
For much they enjoy it, such good cheer they have of it,
Count, baron and knight,
And so greatly do they admire it they often have it copied
And read aloud, so they delight in it,
So often have they amused themselves;
The Lays usually please the ladies,
They hear them joyfully and eagerly,
For they are much to their liking.

La Vie Saint Edmund le Rey. Denis Pyramus (*Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey*, Rolls, 96, vol. ii, p. 138).

2 Rickert, loc. cit., p. 22.

3 A. Kemp-Welch, *Of Six Mediaeval Women*, 1913, p. 32.

The lays are a manual, written from the woman's standpoint, of the manners and ethics of courtesy, whether they describe the nature of true love in a pure-hearted lady; 'Whoever finds a true lover ought faithfully to serve, love and obey him;'[1] or the duty of assiduous care for the wounded; 'In basins of gold they brought water . . . dealing with him in all tenderness.'[2] They depict alike the princess, absorbed in watching a game of chess,[3] or the old tirewoman, reading her psalter, verse by verse.[4]

Marie de France is in her way a professional writer, interested in literary questions, polishing her style, selecting her subjects with care to please an imagined audience. Her attitude, her accomplishment, however exceptional they were, make it impossible to despise the courtly education of women in her day. Something of the same quasi-professional standpoint is noticeable in the one other English woman-writer of the period whose work has survived—the nun Clemence of Barking, known only by her translation, from Latin into French, of the Life of Saint Catherine, 'true friend of God'.[5]

The existing rendering has, she explains, grown out of date; people of the present day hold it in small estimation; she has undertaken to make it anew, according to her poor knowledge. The work of Clemence must have been almost contemporary with that of Marie de France. It bears witness not only to a continued study of Latin in the larger nunneries at least till the beginning of the thirteenth century, but also incidentally to the continuance of a certain literary tradition at Barking itself. It was an Abbess of Barking, sister of St. Thomas of Canterbury, who supplied Garnier with materials for his biography.[6] Some records of the saintly abbesses, such as Hildelith, were evidently preserved; in a manuscript life

[1] *Guigemar*, Rickert, loc. cit., pp. 21–2.
[2] Rickert, loc. cit., p. 17.
[3] *Eliduc*, loc. cit., p. 114.
[4] *Yonec*, loc. cit., p. 58.
[5] 'Sue veraie amie :' see *Romania*, vol. xiii, p. 400 (1884).
[6] Garnier, *La Vie St. Thomas le Martir* (ed. Bekker), p. 78.

of St. Ethelburga, probably to be attributed to Goscelin, the writer mentions a trustworthy book which is his principal source of information, while he has obtained the accounts of the later miracles from living sisters at Barking. The same work tells of the theft from the abbey, soon after the Conquest, of a missal, copied, for use at the altar, by one of the nuns, the memorable Ulfruna.[1]

The romance which Eleanor of Provence wrote in her girlhood, 'Blandin de Cornouailles et Guillaume de Miramar',[2] may have been inspired by a visit paid to the court of her father, Count Raimon, by the young Richard of Cornwall, a nephew of Cœur de Lion, on his way to Syria in 1240. The poem is said to be 'destitute of literary value', a mere schoolgirl's exercise, dull and platitudinous; but it bespeaks a long habitude to the atmosphere of romance, which is of importance, because the marriage of Eleanor with Henry III brought once again into the English Court ideas current in Southern France, the cradle of chivalric courtesy. At the close of her life Eleanor bequeathed to her son, Edward I, a book of romance, *Le Roman de Guillaume le Conquérant*.[3] Latin letters of her daughter, Beatrice of England, are extant. Her successor, Eleanor of Castile, appears to have been able at least to read and write, for a pocket breviary was purchased for her use at a cost of £4 3*s*., and she carried tablets about, along with her embroidery frame.[4] We do not, however, hear again, until the days of the Tudor princesses, of the study of Latin by royal ladies.

5. *Training in Needlework*

The traditional training in embroidery, in court and convent, went on unbroken. When Maud, daughter of Waltheof, Earl of Huntingdon, married King David of Scotland (d. 1153) she was accompanied north of the

1 *Hist. MSS. Comm. Various Collns.*, vol. ii, p. 26.
2 Fauriel, *Hist. de la Poésie Provençale*, t. iii, p. 93.
3 Wood, *Lives of Princesses of England*, vol. ii, p. 284.
4 Wood, loc. cit., vol. ii, p. 283, quoting from Wardrobe Book, 6 Ed. I, ff. 8, 12.

Tweed by her tire-woman, Helisend, the orfrey-worker, super-excellent (per-optime) above all English women of her day in her knowledge of needlecraft.[1] Sandals and a mitre embroidered by Christina, Prioress of Markyate, were sent as a present to the Pope (1151–66).[2]

From generation to generation the young princesses, not content with buying other people's handiwork, made purchases of material and often spent their leisure with their ladies in costly needlework. Margaret, the daughter of Edward I, at Whitsuntide, 1289–90, had bought for her use four oz. of silk, two hundred oz. of gold thread and a spindle, 'for the making of garlands and tressures'.[3] Even more explicit is the bill of £2. 7*s*. 2*d*. for gold thread, silk, pearls, and other necessaries, bought for the Lady Joanna, daughter of Edward III, and 'delivered in her chamber for divers works going on there, to do with them at her pleasure'.[4]

6. *The Teaching of French*

Enough has already been said to suggest that in court and convent alike the prevailing use of the French tongue made its study a practical necessity for the well-bred English girl. During the whole of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries it remained the language of the Court, 'the language of politeness and refinement in the eyes of Englishmen, not only as a result of the Conquest but for its inherent qualities'.[5] Anglo-French pronunciation was already a thing apart. Blonde of Oxford, the heroine of a thirteenth-century Romance, at the age of eighteen, showed when she spoke French that she was not to the manner born:

> Un peu parroit a son langage
> Que ne fu pas née a Pontoise.

[1] *Libellus . . . Beati Cuthberti*, Surtees Soc., 1835, vol. i, p. 152.
[2] Bateson, *Mediaeval England*, p. 223.
[3] Wood, loc. cit., vol. ii, p. 365. Quoted from Wardrobe Book, 18 Ed. I, f. 2.
[4] Wood, loc. cit., vol. iii, p. 241, from Roll of Compt. of Household of King's Children, 14–15 Ed. III.
[5] R. Lambley, *The French Language in England*, Manch. Univ., p. 26.

She and her mother's waiting-women took advantage of the arrival of a young page from Dammartin in the Île de France to converse with him and improve their accent:

> Le tienent d'aprendre françois . . .
> Et en milleur françois le mist.[1]

Early in the fourteenth century guides to letter-writing in French, that is to say collections of model letters, were produced, with accompanying rules and instructions in Latin; the demand for them showed a more widespread education, and they are adapted to meet a great variety of occasions; there is a section especially for the use of women, with model letters from the queen to a knight; from a knight in prison to his lady; from a lady to her lawyer; the abbess to a lady; the mother to her schoolboy son; a sister to a sister. All of these, ingenuously, sometimes rather painfully, reflect the life of the period, just as a modern 'Letter-writer' would do. Thus the sister's letter urges the advisability of her sister's submitting to a loathed marriage arranged by her parents.

Even earlier, towards the close of the thirteenth century, there had appeared a treatise on teaching the French language by Walter of Bibbesworth, which is not only the first French grammar extant either in England or France, and the model of numerous imitators, but invaluable as showing the recognized methods of instruction in French conversation.[2] It also reflects the social conditions of a society which had now absorbed the customs of chivalry and incorporated with its own the vocabulary of courtesy. The book, which is of considerable length, was written at the request of the Lady Dionysia de Mountchesny for the instruction of her family. As far as is known she was the mother of an only daughter, Dionysia the younger, afterwards wife of Hugh de Vere; the treatise, however, appears to be intended primarily for young boys; some of its naïve pleasantries are a little inopportune in a work dedicated

[1] *Blonde of Oxford*, Camd. Soc., 1858, vol. lxxii, p. 13, ll. 358 et seq.
[2] *National Antiquities*, vol. i, Vocabularies, ed. T. Wright.

to a noble lady. For example, an important point of good breeding, part indeed of the science of hunting, was to know the special terms applicable to an assembly whether of men, beasts, or birds; these are set out at length; a covey of partridges, a route of oxen, a crowd of churls, and so forth; but the author adds:

> De dames diret la companye,
> Des ouues (geese) ausi la companye,
> *Ceuz deus sunt asociez,*
> Quele est la resoun ore eliset.[1]

The work is planned on an elaborate scheme: the child's career is followed throughout from the days of infancy, when he has still to be provided with a 'slavering-clout' and restrained from sitting down in the mud; he is taught to name the members of his body, and is then in effect clothed and fed; his meal at morning and evening is detailed; he receives a lump of white bread, the yolk of an egg and, most to his taste, an apple carefully pared with core and pips removed. Then follows the vocabulary of country occupations and their appropriate implements, of women's occupations, ale-making, fishing, all that normally filled the view of a country-lad dwelling in his father's castle or manor house. The book is full of variety, it includes now a riddle, now a proverb, now a vignette of the countryside; it paints homely scenes, in which house-wife Alice sows her linseed and hemp; Dame Muriel threshes and hackles the flax; Dame Hude spins the yarn. The names of wayside flowers, trees, and birds are set out. One can imagine a child learning much and delightfully from its rambling pages, and soon acquiring a good vocabulary.

The decay of the study of Latin both at court and in the convent was in progress throughout the thirteenth century. Towards the close bishops begin to frame their

[1] Of ladies one would say the company,
Of geese also the company,
These two are linked together,
What can be the reason, guess now.

injunctions to nuns in French, and throughout the fourteenth century nuns speak and use French for their petitions;[1] the standard of convent education naturally reflected that in the society from which the sisters were drawn, although it changed more slowly, and by degrees fell behind. Nuns who entered religion after their early childhood were expected to know French. In a recommendation from some member of the Archbishop's household to the Prior of Christchurch, Canterbury, the writer pleads on behalf of a certain 'poor little sister' [*pro quadam paupercula sorore nostra*] that she may be admitted to the nunnery of St. James, Slydone, although it can only be done out of charity, for she is neither literate (that is, able to read), nor erudite in the French language.[2]

7. *Training in Administration*

A capacity for business affairs is usually regarded as a characteristic of the fifteenth century rather than of an earlier epoch: but indications are not wanting that a serious view was taken of administrative responsibility, even when vested in a woman, long before Margaret Paston and her contemporaries gathered into their capable hands the direction of their husbands' estates. The principles of estate-management laid down in such a treatise as that composed by Robert Grossetête, Bishop of Lincoln, for the guidance of Margaret, widow of John Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, were not superseded for some three centuries; their existence explains in a measure the calm assurance of a later generation, at which we are apt to feel so much surprise; they were not in fact creating a precedent nor the first to take up the reins of petty government.

The Rules of St. Robert were written to advise the young Countess how best 'to guard and govern' her 'lands and hostel', that is the manors assigned by the king for her maintenance. The directions presuppose a knowledge of account-keeping, or at least of elementary calculation.

[1] See Power, *Medieval Nunneries*, p. 246.
[2] *Hist. MSS. Comm., Various Collns.*, vol. i, p. 277.

At the close of the year, so they recommend, 'take to yourself all the rolls, and by one or two of the most intimate and faithful men that you have'[1] compare them with last season's expenditure. In a large household personal supervision is the secret of discipline and efficient service; if any servant answers back or grumbles, insist on being lady in your own house; send away any who will not serve your will and pleasure. The twenty-second rule sets the right tone of a lady towards her dependants:[2]

'When your bailiffs and your servants of lands and manors come before you, address them fairly and speak pleasantly to them, and discreetly and gently ask if your people do well, and how your corn is growing, and how profitable your ploughs and stock are; make these demands openly, and your knowledge shall be much respected.'

The knowledge was to have a solid foundation in a careful study of farm economy, the number of acres of plough land, how much stock, how much seed the land should yield. Advice is even given as to the purchase of wine and wax at various fairs held over the country-side; and, as a last concession to womanly weakness, 'your robes purchase at St. Ives.'

[1] Lamond, *Sir Walter de Henley, &c.*, p. 134.
[2] Lamond, loc. cit., p. 141.

V

FROM THE CONQUEST TO THE BLACK DEATH

PART II

1. *Popular Education*

HITHERTO the evidence examined has related chiefly to women of good family. Very early in the twelfth century a pioneer effort was made to give some measure of instruction to those of humbler origin, chiefly to fit them for the conventual life. After studying abroad, Gilbert of Sempringham, still a young man but with a great reputation for learning, returned to his own home and 'began to trade with the talent of knowledge he had abundantly received' and to hold schools for the boys and girls of the neighbourhood.[1] It is clear from the sequel that instruction in religion was his chief care, but there is nothing to show whether both sexes learnt together, although the girls evidently gained some knowledge of Latin.

The comments of contemporary writers suggest that Gilbert's pupils were not of a class which usually received instruction of this kind: William of Newburgh thought worthy of remark in his Chronicle[2] the attempt to 'order and instruct women', that is those not hitherto in the habit of entering nunneries or even held capable of learning. The schoolgirls were probably children of the townsfolk, among them the daughter of a man of Sempringham with whom Gilbert lodged.[3] As a result of the teaching she had so eagerly received, at some time before 1131, she and her six companions entered a cloistral dwelling which Gilbert provided against the north wall of his church of St. Andrew. Poor girls of the place fed the recluses

[1] Rose Graham, *St. Gilbert of Sempringham*, London, 1901, p. 5.
[2] William of Newburgh, *Hist. Rerum Anglic.*, cap. xvi, Rolls, 82, vol. i, p. 54.
[3] Graham, loc. cit., p. 6.

through a window, and were in their turn enrolled as lay-sisters with a special habit and rule.[1]

From these humble beginnings sprang the Gilbertine Order of Sempringham, an offshoot of the Cistercians numbering, in its eight houses, before the Founder's death, seven hundred men and fifteen hundred women. With the history of the Order we are not here concerned, but certain points are of interest educationally because of the status, at least in the early years, of the Gilbertine nuns. The founder's biography describes his Order as a chariot having four wheels, two of men, clerkly and lay, two of women, lettered and unlettered.[2] The regulations throw some light on contemporary standards of knowledge. No girls were admitted under the age of twelve; none received the novice's habit till fifteen, or was professed till eighteen, so that their preparation was prolonged. Under the instruction of a special mistress they learned psalter, hymns, and canticles by heart.[3] Their knowledge of Latin evidently enabled them to employ it conversationally, for the use of the Latin tongue among themselves was forbidden by the rule except when a convenient occasion offered.[4] Only when a girl proved herself unequal to learning 'letters' was she given the choice of becoming a lay-sister, who worked when the others read, or of quitting the house. In order that they might intelligently take part in the services, the lettered nuns were instructed in pointing by the Precentor and Precentrix. Unlike some orders, the Gilbertine Rule forbade all music and singing or chanting: 'for we will that like the Blessed Virgin they shall say the psalms in monotone in the Spirit of humility.'[5]

'In comparison with the Benedictines,' says Miss Rose Graham, 'the Order of Sempringham took but little part in educating the youth of England. The Canons were forbidden by the rule to teach any boys in their houses except novices, because the work might

[1] Graham, loc. cit., p. 10, from *Monasticon*, vi. 2, p. ix.
[2] Ib., p. 14.
[3] Ib., p. 72.
[4] *Monasticon*, vi. 2, p. lxxxii.
[5] Graham, loc. cit., p. 74.

interfere with their care for the nuns; it is, however, possible that the nuns were educating girls at least till 1223, when Honorius III inhibited the admission of any young girl who did not intend to become a nun to be nurtured or taught in convents of the Order.[1]

The practice of learning extensively by heart, necessitated by the scarcity of books, the study of Latin, and the pains taken to enable the nuns to join intelligently in the services, are all matters which have a bearing on the standard of education for girls outside the convent. At a period almost contemporary with the Gilbertine Rule, there is good reason to believe that, apart from the convents, religious women in some parts of England undertook the instruction of children, both boys and girls. Like much of our information about convent-schools, this glimpse of medieval practice is enshrined in ecclesiastical prohibitions.

Ailred, Abbot of Rievaulx (d. 1161), addressing certain counsels in Latin to a woman-recluse, advises her, if she desires to earn her livelihood, to let it be by handiwork, and not by keeping a girls' school, a pursuit too distracting for one of her sacred calling.[2] Incidentally, the alternative suggests that schoolmistresses expected fees. Certain recluses, explains the writer, occupy themselves with teaching girls, and turn the cell into a school-house. The mistress sits at her window, the pupils in the porch. She grows angry when the girls fidget, now laughs at them, now threatens, now shakes a warning finger, coaxes, kisses; sometimes she calls a weeping child nearer to receive the rod, but strokes her face instead and embraces her, calling her 'daughter', and 'little friend'. One would judge from his power of description that the writer had seen not a few kindly incapable self-constituted teachers.

Other anchoresses received from their spiritual advisers

[1] Graham, p. 81. Cf. *Mon. Schools in the Middle Ages*, by G. C. Coulton (Medieval Studies, 10), p. 31.

[2] Migne, *Patrologia*, vol. xxxii, col. 1453, *De Vita Eremitica*, cap. vi.

warnings against the risk of pedagogy including those sisters for whom the *Ancren Riwle* was composed in the first quarter of the thirteenth century. In their case the counsel was given in the vernacular: 'Ancre ne schol nout forwarden scol-meistre ne turnen hire ancre-hus to childrene scole.' They should leave the teacher's trade to others; but their handmaid might teach some little girl too shy to learn among 'gromes'.[1]

Without our pressing their implication too far, these words supply many useful hints; a children's school, for instance, might contain girls as well as boys; and again, a girl might be too nervous to go to a mixed school but was not forbidden to do so; while, at this early date, such an office was recognized as that of a schoolmistress, keeping a children's school. The Dorset anchoresses were clearly apt to give instruction, for they could read in English (such works as the English Book of St. Margaret)[2] and in French; to read long and intently was the advice of St. Jerome himself to women in their position.[3] These accomplishments they had probably acquired in some neighbouring convent—their handmaid also could apparently read well enough to instruct others; should she be illiterate she must be taught by rote the elements of the faith.[4] It is an interesting question whether public opinion required this act of charity, 'to teach the ignorant' from one of such infinite leisure as an anchoress; or whether it was rather expected from those who, before enclosure, were known in many cases to have been professed nuns experienced in training younger women, even perhaps in teaching school-girls, or, at the least to be 'lettered' and convent-bred. From early times it was a recognized mark of sanctity for individual nuns occasionally to exchange the convent for the anchoress's cell. An outstanding example

[1] *Ancren Riwle*, Camd. Soc., 1853, p. 422 (fol. 117 b).

[2] Ib., p. 245. [3] Ib., p. 287.

[4] Ib., p. 425. In the *Ayenbite of Inwyt* (ed. Morris, E.E.T.S., 1866, p. 34), the translator, Dan Michel of Northgate, describes Avarice as 'the maystresse that heth zuo grete scole that alle guoth thrin vor to lyerne, *aise zayth the wryting*' (that is, his French original).

is Eva, daughter of an English nobleman, who, towards the close of the twelfth century, was educated in the nunnery of Winchester, where her talents astonished the abbess and her staff; instead of taking the veil she crossed the sea to put herself under the instruction of a famous recluse named Hervé, probably of English origin, who lived and prayed at Calone near Angers; finally she adopted the same mode of life.[1]

From the beginning of the eleventh century little elementary schools existed in France; most of them were for boys, but under Philippe le Bel there were some also for girls, which at a later date increased considerably. 'Dans le rôle de la taille de Paris en 1292,' M. Charles Jourdain has said, 'on ne voit figurer qu'une seule maîtresse, Dame Tyfaine, qui résidait rue aux Ours, près la rue Saint-Denis; en 1380 on en trouve vingt et une répandues dans les différents quartiers de Paris et formant une Communauté.'[2] In Paris schoolmistresses were authorized by the 'Chantre' of Notre-Dame. They had to promise him obedience and faithfully to observe the statutes of the Corporation. Having taken the oath, they received for a limited period, usually from 6th May for one year, permission to keep school, train young girls in good manners, and teach them the alphabet.[3] The form of the Diploma granted to a schoolmistress may be found in M. Jourdain's pages.[4]

Nothing so formal as this official recognition of the village schoolmistress obtained, so far as is known, in England.[5] At the same time, the teaching of the elements of religion to women and girls was certainly not neglected by the Church; the absence of any evidence as to the

[1] *Hilarii Versus et Ludi*, Paris, 1838, Introd., pp. viii and ix.

[2] Charles Jourdain, *Mémoire sur l'Education des Femmes au Moyen Âge*, p. 127 (Mémoires de l'Académie, vol. xxviii, Part I). He quotes from Félibien, *Hist. de Paris*, t. iii, p. 449.

[3] Ib., p. 128.

[4] Printed from *Archives of Univ. of Paris*, Sorbonne, Carton 1er, liasse 3e, No. 7.

[5] Archbishop Arundel's Constitutions (Provinciale seu Constitutiones Angliae . . . Gul. Lyndwood 1676–7, p. 283) seem to require the supervision of women as well as men teaching the elements of religion.

accredited schoolmistress would seem to point to the mixed village school under an accredited schoolmaster having been in this country somewhat more general than is often supposed. Yet here also there is a difficulty. In France it was undoubtedly the practice of the Church to proscribe mixed schools. The oldest regulation bearing on this point, issued by the Chanter of the Church of Paris in 1357, prohibits them under two separate articles:

'Art. XVII. Every master or mistress of a school shall keep within the limits of his or her commission, and neither exceed it in regard to the number, or the sex, of their pupils.

'Art. XXIII. No mistress shall receive boys in her school without a dispensation from the Chanter, and no master shall receive girls without a similar dispensation.'

The prohibition was subsequently repeated in even more definite terms:

'Art. IX. Item, all masters are forbidden to keep girls in their schools, and mistresses, to keep boys, on any pretext whatsoever.' [1]

M. Jourdain inclines to the belief that in England mixed schools were permitted or at least tolerated. He quotes in support the jesting tale of the clerk Barbosus, who held in Ireland, about 1050, his great school of clerics and lay-men and maidens, and was banished for imposing on the girl-children the clerical tonsure.[2]

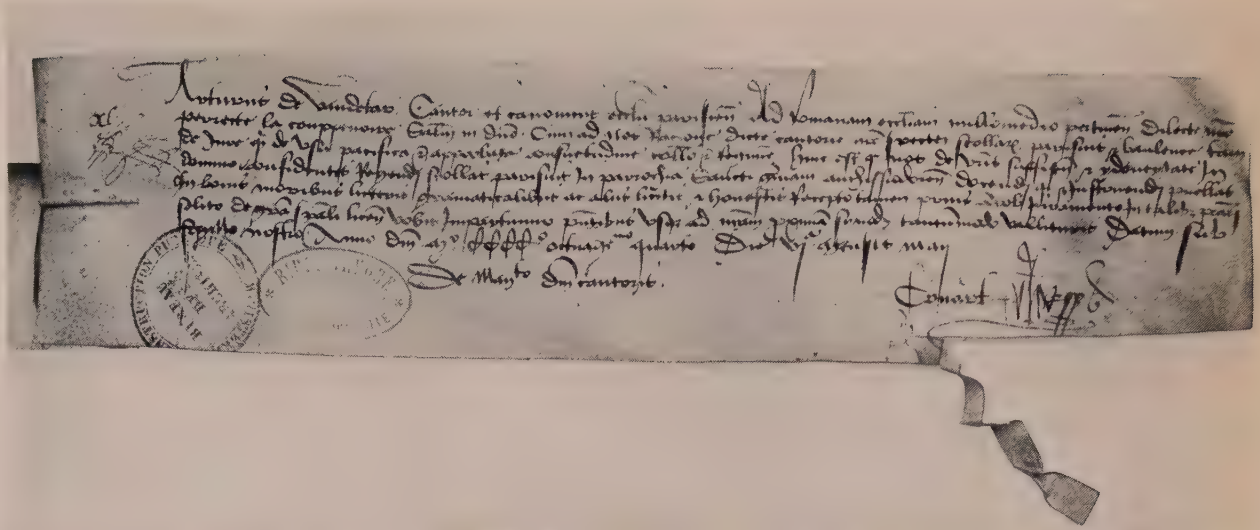
The passages in *Ailred* and the *Ancren Riwle* already discussed are of greater evidential value. But they seem to imply a variation in ecclesiastical policy as between England and France. Even in France, however, mixed schools managed to survive prohibition and denunciation from the ninth to the seventeenth century.

2. *The Teaching of Religion to Girls*

Bishop Frere has stated that 'an unbroken catena of authorities' exists to prove that 'elementary instruction in religion was kept prominently before the people, by

[1] Quoted by Rousselot, p. 87, from Félibien, *Hist. de Paris*, Bk. III, pp. 447–8.

[2] *Polychronicon Ran. Higden*, trans. Trevisa, Rolls, 41, vol. vii, p. 183.



IV. THE LICENCE OF PERIETTE LA COUPPENOIRE, A PARISIAN SCHOOLMISTRESS

Dated May 6th, 1484

'In Paris schoolmistresses were authorized by the "Chantre" of Notre-Dame. They had to promise him obedience and faithfully to observe the statutes of the Corporation', p. 71

the orders of synods and visitations in pre-Reformation times.'[1] In 747 the Council of Cloveshoe decreed that the clergy should learn and expound the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Reference has already been made to the Capitula of Theodulf (994), which required of every Christian person a knowledge of fundamentals of the Faith.

As time went on, certain additions were made to the list of fundamentals; in 1281 Archbishop Peckham added the Ten Commandments; later on the Ave Maria became an accustomed part. Side by side with these episcopal orders there were books containing the matter necessary to be learned by the laity and to be explained by the parish priest. The devotions which had been by degrees added as an appendix to the Psalter were gathered into a separate book, usually known as the Primer, a manual for the use of old and young, and prefixed to the Primer was the elementary material with which lettered and unlettered alike were required to be familiar, namely the Pater Noster, Ave, Credo, and Ten Commandments, and Graces before and after meals.[2] Towards the end of the fourteenth century this introduction was arranged separately in the form of an 'A. B. C.', which thus contained what, together with the psalter, was the basis of instruction in A B C schools. The new compilation at once came into use at court, for Blanche and Philippa, the two daughters of Henry IV, in 1398, the year of his accession, when Blanche was not seven years old, were provided with 'two books of A. B. C.' at a cost of 20*d*.[3]

To teach children to read Pater Noster and Creed, or at least to say them by rote, was the aim of the simplest form of religious education. Knowledge of the Pater Noster was obligatory for admission to the Sacrament; parish priests were instructed to inquire of those who came to

[1] Frere, *Visitation Articles and Injunctions*, Alcuin Club, 1910, vol. ii, p. 7, footnote 1 (for all this passage).

[2] Carleton Brown, *A Study of the Miracle of Our Lady*, Chaucer Soc., 1910, pp. 126–7.

[3] Wood, *Lives of Princesses of England*, vol. iii, p. 311.

confession if they could recite without book the Lord's Prayer, Creed, and Salutation of the Blessed Virgin. This order is found as far back as 960, as late as the reign of Edward VI.

Putting these duties of obligation in their simplest form, we may next ask how little girls obtained the necessary instruction. In many cases they did so from their parents —the parental duty of bringing up children in a knowledge of the faith was fully understood. Gasquet quotes from the fifteenth-century treatise, *Dives and Pauper*, a passage to the effect that 'Every man and woman after his degree is bound to do his business to know God's Law that he is bound to keep. And father, mother, godfathers and godmothers be bound to teach their children God's Law or else do them to be taught'.[1] Again, it was the duty of the parish priest to give elementary instruction to his congregation from the pulpit. This traditional practice is conveniently set out in the First Royal Injunctions of Henry VIII:

'Curates shall in their sermons deliberately and plainly recite of the . . . Pater Noster, the Articles of our Faith and the Ten Commandments, one clause or article one day, and another another day, till the whole be taught and learned by little; and shall deliver the same in writing, or shew where printed books containing the same be to be sold, to them that can read or will desire the same. . '[2].

It was important to encourage the habit of memorizing when books were scarce and dear and the majority of people illiterate, and in the case of women and girls, who were shut out from most sources of learning, this oral teaching needs special emphasis. It was practised, as we have already seen, in Gilbertine nunneries. When, before 1240, Friar Thomas de Hales wrote his *Luve Ron* at 'the instance of a certain maiden dedicated to God', he bade her unroll the scroll and learn it without book in every part and teach it right through to other maidens. At

[1] Gasquet, *Parish Life in Mediaeval England*, p. 142.
[2] Frere, vol. ii, p. 7.

the conclusion of the Assumption of Our Lady[1] the author directly addresses the audience of men and women who, as he surmises, have been sitting still and hearkening to his reading, and points out the advantages of learning the story by rote:

> þe Archbishop Seynt Edmound
> Hath graunted xl daies to pardoun
> To alle that this vie wol here
> Or with good wille wole lere.[2]

Informal oral instruction of a popular kind, for what it was worth educationally, was constantly going on. It still remains to discuss somewhat further the probability of girls having attended A. B. C. schools and also those Song Schools, where boys, that is all the youth of the parish and not choristers only, were taught expressly with a view to their taking a share in singing divine service. The evidence relating to France has already been summarized: recent writers have declared with equal decision, some for, some against, the practice of mixed schools in England. There is little direct, but a good deal of indirect, evidence, some of which has already been described, to make it probable that in many places boys and girls learned together the elements of the faith and incidentally to know their letters and even to read. The frequent injunctions to parish priests to concern themselves with the teaching of all the faithful makes it impossible that girls, who were allowed to have souls if not reason, should have been debarred from this, after all very scanty, intellectual food; apart from general instruction in church, the simplest plan was to bring the children of a locality together in a little school.

[1] Brit. Mus. Add. MS. 10036, f. 6, printed E.E.T.S., vol. xiv, O.S.

[2] The serving-maid Agnes, in Caxton's Alphabet,

> Can well name
> All the grete festes
> And the termes of the yere.

When asked to display her knowledge she declines, but a companion Agatha does it in her place. Caxton, *Dialogues in English and French*, ed. Bradley, E.E.T.S., Extra Series, No. lxxix (1900), p. 28.

The relation of Gilds to such parochial schools seems to have a direct bearing on this subject. Many schools were established by gilds for the children of their town or area. To take two examples at different periods: At Barnard's Castle the Gild of the Holy Trinity paid the stipend of a priest 'to say Mass daily at six o'clock in the morning, and to be resident at Matins, Mass and Even-song, and to keep a free grammar school and a song school for all the children of the town.'[1] Early in the sixteenth century John Rogers was engaged by the Gild of St. John Baptist, Ashwell, 'to syng dyvyne servyce for the said fraternite and parysshens, and pley at organs wythin the said parysshe chirch of Asshewell, and also to keepe a scole and to teche chyldern there gramer and song wythyn the said town,' at a stipend of £8 a year.[2]

Nothing is more remarkable in the Gilds of Medieval England than the equality of men and women-members on the basis of religion. It was to the interest of the Gilds to encourage a knowledge of the elements of religion among both sexes. Many of the women-members were certainly instructed. The Rule of the Gild of St. Katherine at Norwich required:

> 'At the Dirige every brother and sister that is letterede shul seyn for the soule of the dede placebo and dirige in the place wher he shul comen togeder; and every brother and sister that bene nought letterede shul seyn for the soule of the dede XX sythes the pater noster with Ave Maria.'[3]

It would seem not improbable that song schools, at least those established by religious gilds of men and women, would be for 'all the children of the town' in the literal sense of the words, not for one sex only. It is worthy of remark that the first schoolmistress mentioned by name in the records, Matilda Maresflete, 'magistra scolarum,' is found in 1404 on a gild roll of the town of Boston, Lincoln-

[1] Gasquet, loc. cit., p. 142.
[2] Early Chancery Proc., vol. vi, 603/50.
[3] *Lay-Folks' Mass-Book*, E.E.T.S., O.S. 71, p. 216.

shire.[1] Mr. Leach was puzzled as to her status; he considered it highly improbable that she was mistress of the Grammar school and scarcely less improbable, if mistress of the 'petties' or little ones, that she taught girls as well as boys; this is perhaps to overlook the status of women in local gilds. After all Matilda must herself have been taught before she could teach.

The description of a priest's school in London, independent so far as we can judge of any gild or parochial organization, but possibly attached to a chantry, has survived among records of the Chancery Court. About 1500 Sir William Barbour, an old priest of seventy-six years, had a school of some thirty young children, among them Elizabeth Garrard, a little girl of eight, a tradesman's daughter, to whom he taught, as we should anticipate, the Pater Noster, Ave and Credo, 'with ferther lernyng.'[2]

Contemporary wills not infrequently imply a general knowledge of the simplest Latin formularies. It was required of all the poor folk, men and women, admitted to certain Essex alms-houses, that they should be such as could say at least their Pater Noster and Credo in Latin, and in some cases also recite the *de Profundis* in Latin, the dirige and 'our ladies sawter'.[3]

William Ecopp, Rector of Hesterton, in 1472 ordered that at his funeral there should be present in the choir, presumably to sing the service, not only 'William Gibson's boys', who may have been the choristers, but other young children of poor parents, to the number of eighteen, both boys and girls.[4]

The Litel Soth Sermun (early thirteenth century) speaks disparagingly of a young maiden who, when she went to church left her primer at home, locked up in her coffer.[5]

[1] *V.C.H. Lincs.*, vol. ii, p. 451.

[2] Early Chancery Proc., 290/78.

[3] *Ancient Wills*, by H. W. King, *Essex Archaeol. Soc. Trans.*, vol. iv. p. 156.

[4] *Test. Ebor.*, vol. iii, p. 199. For the girls kirtles all of one colour were provided—in the manner of charity schools a century later.

[5] *O. E. Misc.*, ed. Morris, E.E.T.S., 1872, p. 190.

Certain lines in *Piers Plowman*, spoken by Holy Church, which lose force if taken wholly in an allegorical sense, assume that knowledge of the Bible, the Psalter, well-annotated, and the modes of music are the special province of a woman's study. In some versions the passage runs as follows:

> I grette wel his wyf, for I wrot hire þe bible,
> And sette her to sapience and to hire psauter i-gloset,
> Lo! logyk I lered hire, and al þe lawe after,
> And alle Musons in Musyk I made hire to knowe.' [1]

Grammar and the rod on the other hand are for boys:

> Gramer for gurles [i.e. youths] I gon furste to write,
> And beat hem with a baleys but ȝif they wolde lerne.' [2]

The 'parysh towne-clerke' of Skelton's ironic poem, kept a co-educational song school; he was . . .

> a solempne syre and a solayne
> For lordes and ladyes lerne at his scole
> He techyth hem so wysely to solf and to fayne
> That neither they singe wel prike song nor plain.[3]

The evidence direct and indirect, in which one may fairly include the assumption on the part of contemporary writers that in the field of religion women are not all unlettered, and that even the ignorant have learnt certain formulae by heart, seems to justify the belief that girls as well as boys attended the lower departments of the A B C schools, and were pupils at least in certain Song Schools. There they learned by rote the elements of religion, not necessarily, however, to read. Even those who had mastered their letters went so young to field-labour or to the spinning-wheel that they can have carried but little learning on through life.

[1] Langland, *Piers Plowman*, A xi, ed. Skeat, 128.
[2] Ib., 131.
[3] *Poems*, ed. Chalmers, p. 300.

3. *Religious didactic writings for women*

In considering generally religious ministrations for lay people in the Middle Ages, a distinction is constantly to be observed between the provision made for the lettered, who can read English or even Latin, and for the unlettered, who are dependent upon oral instruction and their own powers of memory.

As a rule the lettered women are of better social position, or, as town life develops, of the rich burgher class. As in secular subjects, so in the teaching of religion, their tutors are usually resident members of the household, the duenna or governess who trains the daughters of the family in good manners and social graces, the chaplain who imparts a knowledge of the faith. Some chaplains were at pains to compose or translate special religious treatises in verse or prose for their pupils; there is some likelihood that these were intended not merely for an individual lady of rank but for the household group of which she was the head, which would include both lettered and unlettered persons.

These treatises entered into competition with the romances which absorbed all too much time and thought. It was an unequal contest; any hope of success involved careful abridgement, to avoid ennui, and a deliberate adoption in the field of theology of the tone and conventions of romantic literature. For example, in the middle of the thirteenth century, Robert of Gretham, probably chaplain in the service of a certain Dame Aline, dedicated to his mistress a poem of 20,000 verses, intended to put before her and her household, and, if fortune favoured, before a wider public, the weekly gospels with an exposition. He first impresses on her the true character of the 'chanson de geste', history or fable which she loves to read or to have sung in her presence; these are but vanity, profitless for the soul. He, on the contrary, has prepared for her delight the gospels, very carefully romanticized ('mult proprement enromauncez'), with expositions of

attractive brevity; these stories the saints have themselves composed; he has but rendered them in French since to use Latin and expect lay-folk to read it is nowadays sheer folly. They are for the unlettered, 'les nun lettrés,' to learn, and for those who know both letters and the French tongue to read and impart to others.

Another example of even greater interest is a poem of about the same period, by an unknown writer, on the Love of God and Hatred of Sin, known as 'Petit sermon'; this also was written for a woman, addressed by the author familiarly as 'bele suer'. The poem deals at length with the characteristics of Love, human and divine, and might well stand for a type of what may be called chivalric theology. Although writers of this period so much deplore the evil influence of romances upon women, yet unconsciously their own writings are imbued with the same spirit; they invest the mystic relation between Christ and the human soul with that same romantic quality which made service of the chosen lady, when stripped of its baser elements, a beautiful and uplifting influence.

In their heaven reigns 'la bele emperice, Madame Seinte Marie', who is both lady and maid; there too are the fair chivalry who for God's sake held their bodies in poor repute, patriarch and doctor, prophet and confessor, apostles, martyrs, and saints, and those innocent women who with unshaken courage delighted in evil fortune.

Religious teaching of such a colour made a natural appeal to women brought up in the conventions of chivalry. In popular lyrics this character is less pronounced; poems like the *Luve Ron*, or *On God Ureison of Ure Lefdi*, with its angels who play and sway and sing before the Throne, and its heavenly household, rose-red and lily-white in their clinging dresses, are intended to be sung by women who have them by heart (not necessarily by nuns only), and were sometimes composed by women writers.

VI

THE BLACK DEATH TO THE REFORMATION

1. *General Characteristics of the Period*

THE period between the 'first death' and the Reformation is one of great interest and movement in the history of education. As regards the education of girls, details for the earlier years are meagre and obscure; the difficulty is not so much to detect signs of progress, symptoms of response to a changing order, as to find their root in any advance of educational practice. Changes there were, but the most outstanding were due in the first instance to social upheavals, civil war, and the recurrence of devastating epidemics, rather than to any intellectual stimulus. Towards the close of the fifteenth century the whole atmosphere becomes for women as it were charged with hopefulness and promise: very slowly but surely their outlook is about to be transformed. The movement is more easily discerned in the world of men than of women; yet the intellectual release which at last drew women out of their time-worn routine of medievalism, could not have been effected without some preparatory stages. Margaret Roper, Margaret Tanfield, the Lady Jane Grey, noble and inspiring figures, were not in fact the phenomena they are apt to appear.

It is true that English women had few or no forerunners, of their own sex, in their own country, to bear comparison with the scholarly ecclesiastics and noblemen of Edward the Fourth's reign, with Duke Humphrey and John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, with Bishop Grey of Ely and the founder of Lincoln College, Oxford, men whose perception of the new ways of truth led them to enrich their universities with books and manuscripts from the treasure-houses of Italy.[1] Yet, in their own vein, women throughout the century showed themselves lovers of books; towards its close, in the person of the Lady Margaret, they had their own patroness of learning and

[1] See Scofield, *Edward IV*, vol. ii, pp. 444 et seq.

of that young miracle the printing-press. A depth of piety, a strange thoughtfulness was manifest in the Lollard women, many of them of obscure position, who risked their lives for the treasure of God's Word; other women, like Juliana of Norwich, who speaks of herself as unlettered, were caught away into the mystic's heaven. In many, a practical capacity seemed to outstrip the intellectual, simply because no other sufficient outlet for mental energy was at present available. Among cloistered women there is no figure comparable with Prior Selling of Canterbury, the student of Bologna, endowing his cathedral library with Greek and Latin manuscripts, or, through his pupil Linacre, introducing the schools of England to the study of Greek. Yet the fact that enthusiasm of this kind was stirring in the life of monasticism, supposed to be dying upon its embers, must needs make us hesitate before we banish the nunnery school altogether from the intellectual ancestry of Tudor women-scholars. All these matters may be further pursued, yet always with a sense of the inadequate information available for our study.

Reverting once more to the early years of our period, years of confusion and distress; in the opinion of contemporary writers important linguistic changes followed directly upon the catastrophe of the Black Death; to it was to be attributed a general revival of English speech in all classes throughout the land, and especially the disappearance from the grammar school of Anglo-French as a medium of instruction[1]; the withdrawal, through death or ignominious flight, of alien teachers left a fair field for the mother-tongue. This change did not, however, imply that the old custom among gentlepeople of having their boys and girls taught to speak the courtly language was altogether abandoned, although for the time being it was probably less general.[2]

[1] Cf. Higden, Polychronicon, cap. LIX, Rolls, 41, ii. 157.

[2] About 1450 Bryan Roucliffe wrote of his little four-year-old girl to her grandfather, Sir William Plumpton, 'Your daughter and myn . . . speaketh prattily and french and hath near hand learned her sawter.' *Plumpton Corresp.*, Camd. Soc., 1839, p. 8.

The educational effects of the pestilence were not confined to the question of language. Hitherto the classes of the community attending the grammar schools, both in town and country, had been chiefly children of free, non-gentle persons. The great changes in the villein's position which followed by degrees upon scarcity of labour and were accentuated by the Peasants' Revolt, soon made themselves felt in the school-population; under improved conditions, the villein began to educate his child. In 1391 the Commons took alarm at the possibilities of increased papal interference which might accompany a great increase of clerkly persons in their own country. They prayed the king that no one of the unfree class, 'neif or villein', who served a bishop or other religious person, might put his children to school. The danger was felt to be most threatening among those who were directly under ecclesiastical control. But the barriers between learned and unlearned were not less unstable than those between free and unfree now so nearly ready to vanish away. The Commons' petition was refused; and the Apprentices Act of 1406, while it restricted liberty of apprenticeship to a trade or industry, recognized popular claims by insuring to every man liberty to educate his children of both sexes wherever he might choose.[1] The earlier petition had used the word 'children', and, if we judge by the context, was probably concerned only with boys; the 'first Statute of Education' expressly showed that by 'children' sons and daughters alike were intended. The number of girls now seeking apprenticeship was considerable, and women's services on the land were not to be overlooked. At the same time, it would be rash for us to assume that a demand for better instruction for girls generally had arisen which, in the circumstances, it was politic to recognize. The permission in the Act to educate girls as well as boys is so much out of the ordinary that it invites some further consideration.

The outbreaks of plague led to a shortage of priests throughout the country; many died, others, the baser

[1] 7 Hen. IV, c. 17, Stat. of the Realm, ed. 1816, ii. 157.

sort, turned their backs upon poverty-stricken villages and sought

> a lycence and a leve at London to dwelle
> And syngen there for symonye, for silver is swete.[1]

An exodus which tended to decrease the number of schools of the lowest grade and of village teachers must needs have hampered especially the scanty provision of learning available for girl-children, and that, too, at a moment when the desire for knowledge was extending to fresh classes in the community. In London or the larger towns there was less likely to be a shortage of educational facilities. The Act of 1406 was intended to restrict migration for the sake of apprenticeship and an urban career, at or under the age of twelve,[2] and so to keep labour on the land; but it left all parents entirely free as regards the choice of a school, even, apparently, free to put their boys and girls to learning (as distinguished from craft-education), in a town.

The practice of trade-apprenticeship was not limited to the poorer classes of the community. The daughters of the smaller landed gentry and of tradesmen were, about this period, often apprenticed at great distances from home. But these parents, for the most part, would possess well over the income of 20*s*. a year, which the Act specified, and in any case their 'estate' did not require that their children should 'follow the plough', so that after as before the date of the Act they were at liberty to come and go, for schooling or any other purpose, as they might please; no legislation was required to ensure them this privilege. The scholastic provision of the Act[3] could therefore only have novelty, or indeed any practical bearing, in so far as it affected the villein's child, the poorest freeman's daughter; it appears to contemplate their desire in the first place to 'take learning', a desire which is borne out by the Petition of 1391, and in the second place even to take learning at some distance from home.

What types of schooling were in fact in use, and in any

[1] *Piers Plowman*, Prol., ed. Skeat, l. 86.
[2] Cf. 12 Rich. II, cap. v (1388).
[3] Cf. Leach, *Educ. Charters*, p. 387.

way available for the daughters of enterprising parents? For a limited number of girls, by custom chiefly those of good family, there was the nunnery school; for a far greater number and in varying grades, in addition to the village school, there was the lay equivalent to convent education, the opportunity, that is, of being placed 'at borde and scole' with some family of greater or less distinction. The Act offers no obstacle to this way of advancement. Perhaps as a concession this amounted to little, but it appears at least to recognize the fact that, owing to changing conditions, the peasantry might be expected or might desire to send their daughters away for the same reasons, in their degree, as those for which girls of good position had long been sent for nurture to noble houses. Euphemistically they went to 'take learning', to better themselves; in actual fact they entered a domestic thraldom where little pretence of instruction was entertained. In the practice of 'placing-out', which calls for a special study, the origin of boarding-schools for girls is beyond a doubt to be found, although at this early period the choice of 'school' was not regulated to any great extent by the intellectual advantages which it afforded. Even the value of nunnery schools can best be estimated if they are regarded as a special form of placing-out, where nurture, instruction in the manners and usages of polite society, quite as much as book-learning, was the end in view.

For at least a century past there had been a steady increase in the number of schools all over the country, especially those connected with gilds. The priests attached to chantries were also expected to exercise the office of a schoolmaster. A special characteristic of the fifteenth-century school was a tendency to prefer lay schoolmasters, often married men, to priests. This tendency might have been expected to open a way to the licensing and employment of women-teachers. There is, however, no evidence that the number of schoolmistresses bore even approximate relation to the number of schoolmasters. Search has revealed only one possible successor to Matilda Mares-

flete who taught school at Boston in Lincolnshire in 1404, namely Elen Skolemastre of Taunton, who in 1494 received a legacy of 3*s*. 3*d*.[1] As a general rule no doubt girls were prepared, within narrow limits and by well-tried methods, in their own home or another's, for the outstanding interests of their lives, the practice of their religion, the attainment of an advantageous marriage, and the adequate supervision of their households.

A slighter but still interesting indication of widespread changes in the social order bears on the 'knowledge of courtesy' always an important subject for girls. The English school of manners was a subject of national pride. Richard II was reported to have said, approving the youthfulness of his eight-year old bride, Isabella of France, he should 'ordre her at his pleasure and after the maner of Englande'.[2] The Wars of the Roses, the violent death of the feudal system already moribund, must have scattered to humbler homes many, both men and women, who retained vivid memories of the social usages they had been accustomed to observe in the petty courts of the Baronage. We hear in the seventeenth century of the discarded town-bred lady's maid turning schoolmistress and teaching country girls a travesty of fine manners belonging to her somewhat tarnished past. It was due perhaps to this kind of migration that during the fifteenth century the 'knowledge of courtesy' with all its implications, came by degrees to be regarded as a matter for imitation in a class of society which had hitherto derided or ignored its artificial restraint. Caxton's *Book of Good Manners* was translated from the French at the request of William Pratt, a Mercer of London.[3]

Even those schools of gentility the nunneries were being compelled by poverty to admit the townsman's and the yeoman's daughter and girls with even less claim to social

[1] *Somerset Wills*, Series I, p. 323, cf. *supra*, p. 76.

[2] Froissart. (Tudor Translations ed. W. E. Henley 1903) vol. vi. cap. cxcvii, p. 140; but see Froissart (ed. Buchon), vol. 13, p. 222 'il la duira . . . et la mettra et inclinera à la *matière* d'Angleterre.'

[3] Duff, *Caxton*, p. 60.

distinction. Chaucer has immortalized the Miller's Wife of Trumpington, with her tainted birth and tawdry reputation, pluming herself on her 'kinrede and her nortelrye that she had lerned in the nonnerye'.[1]

In regard to the general estimation, women were at this time in the trough of the wave; they had fallen from the crest almost of divinity; on the tide of the new learning some few of them were to reach new intellectual standards before the fifteenth century closed.

Meanwhile a new type of woman, business-like, even in the affairs of her religion, somewhat hard, less sensitive to beauty, less concerned with social charm than her ancestresses, is the type most representative of a harsh and materialistic age. So knowledgeable, so efficient does she show herself to be, so capable and well-informed in certain practical directions, that, a complete lack of youthful training being clearly out of the question, one is driven to conjecture some virtue in the nunnery school, some good practical results from the system of placing-out and of home tuition. It is easy to believe that a child boarded in a strange household, and expected to make herself useful, is in the way, at least, of having her wits sharpened by adversity, and of learning quickly what may bring her into favour with an exacting mistress. But the tendency of such a system to encourage hardness and a lack of the gentler qualities that thrive in happy home life, also explains many of the unattractive qualities which fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Englishwomen display.

2. *The Lollard Women*

The importance of religious teaching in the education of girls enters at this time, with the spread of Lollard opinions in England, upon a new phase. Women have always shown themselves particularly sensitive to movements of the religious consciousness, but it is startling to find with what eagerness they pressed forward, even by the path of martyrdom, into the new liberty of the soul

[1] *Reeves Tale*, ed. Skeat, l. 3968.

which the reformed teaching appeared to offer; startling, because intellectually they had always depended upon the teachings of churchmen: and for this reason also highly significant. The whole tone and content, for example, of Foxe's record, as it reflects the religious opinions of Lollard women, is in complete contrast to the triviality and flippancy of such a writer as the Knight of La Tour, when he deals with the same subject in a book which orthodox contemporaries of the Lollards were reading with avidity. Both in the earlier period of Lollard activity, before it was driven underground by persecution and obscured, during the Wars of the Roses, by civil strife, and in the later, when it formed a preamble to the Reformation, women are found in considerable numbers, as learners and as active teachers and promulgators of the new doctrines.

Three years before the death of Wycliffe the advent of Anne of Bohemia to be the queen of Richard II created an important link between the English Lollards and the European movement of reform. Some of the numerous Bohemians in her train are known to have introduced Wycliffe's writings to John Huss. Anne was the daughter of the Emperor Wenzel, the founder of the University of Prague.[1] As befitted her father's child she was highly educated, and if we may judge from her husband's overwhelming grief at her early death, and from the tribute paid by Archbishop Thomas Arundel at her funeral, a woman of great charm and depth of religious feeling:

'In his comendynges of hir, he seide it was more joie of hir than of any whoman that evere he knewe; ffor notwithstanding that sche was an alien borne, sche hadde on Engliche al the foure gospeleris with the docturis upon hem, and he seide sche hadde sent hem unto him, and he seide thei weren goode and trewe and comended hir in that sche was so grete a lady and also an alien, and wolde so lowliche studiee in so vertuous bokis.'[2]

Wycliffe also comments on the fact of the noble queen of England possessing the gospel written in three languages,

[1] Art. *D.N.B.* [2] Purvey's *Treatise*, quoted in *Lollard Bible*, p. 445.

her native Czech, German, and Latin.[1] The freedom to study Holy Writ unreproved, indeed with archiepiscopal sanction, in the familiar daily speech, was not to be won as a universal privilege without a long and bitter struggle; on the part of Lollard women the struggle was characterized by the same passionate eagerness for enlightenment which marked also the entry of women into the treasures of classic lore. Most striking is the fact that these Lollard students of the Bible were chiefly drawn from the artisan and agricultural classes, usually regarded as totally unlettered and untaught. It was Margery Backster, the wife of a wright in Martham, a Norfolk village, about 1429, who urged her friend Joan Cliffland, to bring her maid to their house to hear 'the law of Christ . . . written in a book that her husband was wont to read to her by night'. Backster was himself 'well learned in the christian verity', but his wife does not appear to have been able to read, though she imparted to a friar what she had acquired of the gospel in English.[2] Other women of the sect, of no better social position, could study for themselves; the daughter of Thomas Moon of Ludney was able to read; the wife of William Bate, a village tailor, like her husband and son, could 'read English very well'. Sir Hugh Pie, a Lollard priest, bequeathed to Alice, servant to William White, a New Testament.[3]

Some sixty or seventy years later, when persecution was again rife and many depositions of heretics and their betrayers are on record, the evidence points much in the same direction. The invention of printing, with the consequent cheapening and more widespread multiplication of books and tracts, had indeed made it possible for a greater number of Lollard women to possess Bibles of their own and to learn to read; but at the same time the older practice of memorizing was still very prevalent. We hear constantly of suspects who had learned from one another favourite portions of Scripture, the Epistle of

[1] *Lollard Bible*, ed. Deanesley, p. 278.
[2] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, vol. iii, Part II, p. 595. [3] Ib., p. 597.

St. James in English, the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Paul, the Gospel of St. John. Agnes Ashford of Chesham, the wife of a smith, teaches James Morden parts of the Sermon on the Mount; he comes to her five times for the lesson. When apprehended she is bidden to recite the same passages before six bishops, and to teach it 'no more to any man, and especially not to her children'.[1] The pupil, James Morden, in his turn, passes on the new knowledge to Alice Atkin; of him she learns the time-honoured elements of her faith, Pater Noster, Ave Maria, and Creed, but learns them intelligently, in English, together with 'the five Marvels of St. Austin, and another piece of an English book, beginning "Here ensue four things by which a man may know where he shall be saved"'. During the great heretic hunt at Amersham in 1511 much is heard of Alice Harding as a teacher; she receives the daughters of her co-religionists because 'she can better instruct them than many others'. This Alice was 'a famous woman among them, and had a good memory, and could recite much of the Scriptures and other good books; and therefore when any conventicle of these men did meet at Burford, commonly she was sent for to recite unto them the declaration of the Ten Commandments and the Epistles of Peter and James'. Her daughter, Joan, shared her parent's knowledge and fervour; she too had learned the commandments, 'the seven deadly sins, the seven works of mercy, the five wits, bodily and ghostly, the eight blessings and five chapters of St. James's Epistle'.[2] A girl called Agnes Edmunds was put to service with Alice Collins by her father, so that she might be instructed in God's Law.

Lollard women possessed a number of books which they passed from hand to hand, and they were eager to procure others even at considerable cost. Joan Sampson, a carpenter's wife of Aldermanbury, had two books in

[1] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, vol. iv, Part I, pp. 224–5.

[2] Ib., p. 238. For other instances see account of Trials before Bishop Tunstall in 1528, Brewer, vol. iv, Part II, pp. 1845, &c.

English.[1] The wife of Robert Pope had an English book bound in boards and three in parchment covers, and a volume of the service of the Virgin Mary in English.[2] The acquisition of books accepted as orthodox, but hitherto only available in Latin, proves an eagerness to learn rather than an eagerness for novel opinions. Alice Sanders, wife of Richard Sanders of Amersham, gave twelve pence to Thomas Holmes to buy a certain English book for her daughter, 'to whom Thomas Holmes answered again a noble would not suffice to buy it'. Another time, undeterred, she gave him sixpence, 'to the buying of a certain book in English, which cost five marks', a passage which seems to imply a contribution to a common fund for books beyond the means of the individual buyer, or perhaps purchase by instalments.[3] Mistress Alice Dolly of Stanton Harcourt in 1520 possessed a book which 'held against pilgrimages', one covered with boards in red containing the twelve articles of the Creed and one, 'a black book, which she set most price by, which book she kept ever in her chamber or in her coffer with divers other books.'[4]

The women who figure in the heresy trials of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, wives and daughters of smiths and shearmen, carpenters, wheelers, fullers, and husbandmen, brickmakers, weavers, and the like, stand between the old order and the new. On the one hand they belong to the school which, still without the printed word, commits to memory its treasures of wisdom, and depends mainly upon the teacher of religion for intellectual stimulus; on the other, they look forward to a greater freedom and enlightenment, won in part by their bitter sacrifice; in their hands is the open Bible; women as well as men are the accredited teachers of their youth.

3. *The Books of Courtesy*

The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry represents the general lines of thought, and the moral standards upon

[1] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, vol. iv, Part I, p. 206. [2] Ib., p. 230.
[3] Ib., p. 231. [4] Ib., Part II, p. 582.

which the girlhood of England was nourished intellectually—yet was steadily growing—during the fifteenth century. It was actually written in France, about 1371–2, to instruct the Knight's daughters in the qualities admirable in pure and perfect womanhood, and for a century and a half it enjoyed a great vogue in many European countries. Caxton's translation, published in 1484, was widely read but never reprinted; it was made 'at the request of a noble lady which hath brought forth many noble and fair daughters which be virtuously nourished', and the preface advises 'every gentleman or woman having children desiring them to be virtuously brought forth to get and have this book'.[1] There were earlier English renderings, including one made for a person of rank in the reign of Henry VI.[2] On the whole the treatise deals with those same questions of religion, manners, and morals which had been, since the age of St. Jerome, considered peculiarly important for a woman; but in many details it reflects a state of society rapidly supervening upon feudal conditions, and is a curious hotch-potch of time-honoured theories interpreted, or sometimes misinterpreted, in the light of contemporary thought. At once more sophisticated and less idealistic than earlier works of the kind, it inculcates wifely affection and subservience, rather than the romantic love of chivalry; its tone towards religious observances has that strong taint of commercialism against which the spiritual instinct was presently to revolt, a tone placidly self-regarding and worldly. The paramount religious duties for a woman are prayer, confession, and fasting. To fast and hear many masses, as well as to pray unceasingly, turns to profit both in this world and the next; the devout maiden is rewarded by a husband, 'a rich knight and a puissant'.

The virtue of humility is to be practised towards all men, but specially towards the poor, because it is likely

[1] Duff, *Caxton*, p. 60.

[2] *The Boke of the Knight of La Tour-Landry*, compiled for the Instruction of his daughters, E.E.T.S., 1868, Introd. p. xiii.

to win respect and admiration; as the writer is able to prove from an experience of his own:

'It happed as y was not longe sethe with a companie of knyghtes and ladies, a gret ladi dede of her hode and bowed her ayenst a taillour. And one of the knyghtes saide. "Madame, ye have done of youre hode to a taillour." And she saide that she was gladder that she had do it of to hym thanne to a lorde. And thei alle sawe her mekenesse and wisdom, and helde her wyse and the knight leuid that tolde her of the tailour.' [1]

Stress is still laid on the importance of posture and demeanour, which may even influence a girl's destiny in marriage. The King of Denmark once received an embassy desirous of choosing amongst his daughters a wife for the King of England. The final arbiter was a lady. The eldest daughter was fairest but failed to pass the test because 'she held not her estate and port sure, but looked small, and winked oft, and spake afore she understood what was said of her, and ever looked over the shoulder, and ever beating her eyelids together'. The second daughter talked too much; the youngest, though less comely, had the best manners, spoke seldom and demurely, wore a meek expression and was perfectly composed. She was accordingly chosen to wear the crown: 'For there is no beauty nor nobleness that is peer to good manners, sure and firm in behaving and countenance.'[2]

The pert forward damsel not infrequently admired in the romances has now gone out of fashion; the present-day suitor thanks heaven when he is able to withstand her advances. The qualities desired in a marriageable girl have in some ways a modern ring. The ambassadors of Spain who are sent to Aragon in search of a royal bride require of their future queen that she shall literally know how to 'play the game'. The two princesses under scrutiny sat down to play 'at the tables' with two knights. The eldest chid her partner when she lost, and gave him hasty and hot words. Her sister, who had also been unfortunate in her play, 'made no semblaunt of her losse, nor saide not [nought], but *made as good chere as she had wonne*'.[3] Lessons

[1] Ib., p. 15. [2] Ib., pp. 16, 17. [3] Ib., p. 19.

of such practical good sense countervail to some degree the sickly hue of most of the Knight's precepts.

Towards the close of the book a brief passage bears directly on the literary education of girls. By the example of Debora, 'Young maidens, should be put unto school to learn virtuous things of the scripture, where through they may the better see and know their salvation and to eschew all that is evil in manner'. To put young children to school and make them books of wisdom and science, and books of virtue on the model of the holy fathers, is commendable; not so to encourage the study of volumes that speak of love-fables and other vanities.[1]

While the Knight of the Tower thus set out his somewhat inadequate educational programme for girls of the knightly class, two English writers appealed on much the same lines to girls of humbler origin. *How the Good Wiff taughte her doughter*,' a poem of about 1420, is entirely concerned with precepts of conduct, simple and direct, with the duty of church-going and the correct demeanour at a service, the duty of wifely submission and a certain diplomacy in handling a difficult spouse:

> So maist thou slake his mood
> And be his dere derlynge . . .[2]

A demeanour proper in courts befits also humbler surroundings; there must be no lack of composure, no romping, over-loud laughter, over-wide yawns. This daughter of the people is free to go where she will; let her be circumspect in town, nor attempt to sell her handwoven cloth in the open market, nor indulge too freely at the tavern, nor attend wrestlings and cock-fights. Let her govern her household wisely, find out what most needs doing and set them to work without delay, but if 'nede be greet and the tyme streite', take a hand herself. Let her correct faults judiciously:

> To compelle a dede to be doon and there be no space
> It is but tyranny, without temperance and grace.[3]

[1] *The Boke of the Knight of La Tour-Landry*, E.E.T.S., 1868, p. 117.
[2] *How the Good Wiff taughte her doughter*, E.E.T.S., Babees Book, p. 38, l. 42
[3] Ib., p. 42, l. 129.

There must be no counterfeiting wealth, with rich robes and garlands, but obligations honestly met and borrowings repaid. The poem concludes:

Now have y thee taught daughter As my modir dide me . . .
Betere were a child unbore
Than untaught of wiis lore
Mi leve child.[1]

The same sensible code of every-day conduct, somewhat unrefined but striving after a greater refinement, is contained in a Northern rhyme, The Thewis [manners] of Gudwomen. No doubt both poems were written in this form to be the more easily committed to memory. The 'Thewis' shows a somewhat deeper insight into feminine nature. The author has the traditional dread of inactivity for a woman and recommends her to be constantly occupied, and even on a holiday 'to reid bukis or lere wefinge'.[2] His advice for quite young girls is austere; but he is convinced of the great importance of their training in childhood, under a good mistress who knows good manners and the virtue that is in chastisement, if they are to grow up a credit to their friends.

4. *Business Ability*

Apart from the elementary functions of trade and handicraft, the sale of fish or beer, the weaving of coarse cloth, there are during the fifteenth century many outstanding examples of feminine activity in business matters which require intellectual alertness and, as one would imagine, considerable mental training.

'Evidence of confidence in the administrative capacity of women', Miss Abram has said, 'may be seen in the large number of cases in which they were appointed executrices, not by their husbands alone but by all kinds of people. Women were also made feoffees to uses, they were often possessed of property bestowed on them by their fathers, or husbands on marriage, and the care of it gave them some training in the management of land.'[3]

[1] Ib., p. 46, l. 202.
[2] *The Thewis of Gudwomen*, E.E.T.S., 1870, p. 108, l. 3769.
[3] Abram, *Social England in the Fifteenth Century*, p. 142.

It is indeed difficult to believe that no definite instruction in the technique of commerce, in the meaning of legal terms, in keeping accounts, and so forth was available at this time for girls as it undoubtedly was for boys.

The 'Manières', the first text-books in commercial French, which appeared towards the close of the century, supplied model forms showing how to draw up cartularies, indentures, obligations, acquittances, and so forth for the instruction of traders' children.[1] The merchant silk-women of the City of London with their large commitments and their dealings with foreign merchants, or the women wool-merchants of York, cannot have been ignorant of these matters, or they could scarcely have held their own for so long and so successfully in their chosen industries.

The intricate and ingenious legal proceedings (described in Sir H. Maxwell Lyte's *History of Dunster*), by which a life-interest in Sir John de Mohun's numerous manors, unsecured by any marriage settlement, was conveyed to his wife, Joan, daughter of Sir Bartholomew de Burghersh, were carried out with the active co-operation of that very masterful lady. At her death she handed over the documents connected with her negotiations to the Prior of Christchurch, to be entrusted to two monks guarding the Shrine of St. Thomas.[2]

The same grasp of affairs is to be observed in a letter written in the reign of Henry IV by Alice de la Pole, Countess of Suffolk, granddaughter of the poet Chaucer, to her chaplain, Sir Symon Braills:

'Syr Symonds,' it runs, 'I recommend me to you, and whereas ye write to know whedir the patent be [by] my lord of the ward [ship] of Colys sonne de herede in heredem shuld be any prejudice to my lord or not. As for that, and if my lord be soo agreed that he shall have yt in that maner of foorme, then as longe as ony of the heyres of Cole, both Brothers and Systers, and all other that are or shall be heyres of the same, have dissessyn, they and there heres beying

[1] Lambley, loc. cit., p. 40.
[2] Maxwell Lyte, *History of Dunster*, vol. i, p. 46 et seq.

within age at the time of their ancestors dissesse [decease], so long my lord shall not have the ward, nor nevyr shall have till som be off full age. And so I woll the pleynesse should be understoud to you. Late my lord doo as yt please hym. Wreten at London.' [1]

Whether or not the letter elucidated the chaplain's perplexities, at least the plainness of the situation was evident enough to the writer.

More agreeable than either of the foregoing are the passages in the Paston Letters which display the vigour of intellect, the versatility, which Margaret, Lady Paston, devoted, in most troublous circumstances, to the management of her husband's affairs. We see her copying a deed that bears upon the Earl of Suffolk's claim to some of his land, and observing that the seal of arms on the original document bears no likeness to that of the Earl's ancestors.[2] She grapples with the repair of Sir John Paston's tenancies, discusses rentals, searches rolls for information which he requires; she takes a distress for rent and ferm at Drayton, and has the cattle of certain tenants put in pinfold from Saturday morning to Monday afternoon. The offenders come to ask for their beasts back; Margaret who 'understands the form of law' replies that they can have them if they pay their debt ready money, or else give her sufficient surety and bond of obligation. Their answer is they dare not take up a bond, and have no money. 'Therefore', she remarks, 'I kept stylle the bestys.' They were not, in fact, restored until the arrival of a sheriff's replevin, or writ for restitution, bearing his seal, beyond which resistance could not safely be carried.[3] With equal competence, Margaret deals with a Bishop's commission for the appointment of a new parson to Drayton; she well knows how it must be proclaimed in Drayton Church, 'iij tymes by a Deen and after that, yff he appyre not with in vj monthys after the fyrst proclamation, that then he for to be depryvyd and the patron to present whom he luste, and ells your presentacyon ys not sufficient'.[4] She has clearly

[1] *Hist. MSS. Comm., Eighth Report*, Appendix, p. 629.
[2] Gairdner, *Paston Letters*, vol. ii, p. 176, Letter 499.
[3] Ib., p. 191, Letter 504.
[4] Ib., p. 193, Letter 505.

studied with care the episcopal formula, which probably reached her written in Latin. Her mother-in-law, Agnes Paston, of an older generation, is also familiar with law-terms, and can write a vigorous if ill-spelt letter in her mother-tongue when she considers her rights are at stake.

The disturbed times in which they lived drove the Paston ladies to rely upon themselves, but self-reliance is not the only mark of competence they display.

5. *Influence of the Court*

The gradual unsettlement of feudal institutions and the dynastic changes which marked the period we are now reviewing made the influence of the Court upon women's upbringing less powerful and less far-reaching. The old ideas of education for kingship were of necessity ineffective when rights of succession were continually in the balance, and the throne passed to men not themselves the sons of kings, whose wives and families had not been brought up in the expectation and pride of royalty.

The most frequent notices bear on the cultivation of musical tastes. At the feast at which Richard II quarrelled with John of Gaunt, the Countess of Exeter was esteemed of all present the best dancer and singer.[1] A passion for music characterized Henry IV and his family: his first wife, the Countess of Derby, sang to the guitar; strings were purchased for her instrument, costing eight shillings,[2] and a new parchment skin was stretched on her canticum.[3] Harps were bought from William Meuston, a harpmaker, for Henry V and his queen.[4]

Catherine, the sixth daughter of Edward IV, had some knowledge of music; she paid three shillings and four-pence to Lord d'Aubigny's minstrel for setting and mending her instrument and a like amount to the king's servant

[1] *Arch.* xx, p. 60, from Bibl. du Roy, MS. 635, p. 5.
[2] Wylie, *Henry IV*, vol. iv, Appendix A (Wardrobe Accounts), p. 277.
[3] Wylie, loc. cit., vol. iii, p. 325.
[4] Devon, *Issues of the Exchequer*, p. 365.

for bringing her a harp.[1] Music-lessons were not, however, confined to maidens of rank. Richard Barton of Whenby, a Yorkshire squire, bade his executors 'fynde Agnes my doghtter gettyn on playng with parte of my gudis, to she come to the age of xiij'.[2]

The lady mistress, versed in the manners of polite society, still held sway in the royal schoolroom, her influence not always of the best. Unwisely, since the King desired to imbue his eight year old wife with English ideas, Isabella the child-queen of Richard II had at first a French governess, the Lady de Coucy. She was dismissed, owing to her fondness for keeping an almost regal state, and sent back to France, her debts being paid by the King's order; and her office was filled by an Englishwoman, Lady Mortimer.[3] Mary Hervey was governess to the children of Henry IV and apparently taught the young Henry grammar; his school book was bought in London, '7 libris grammaticae in uno volumine contentis', costing 4*s*.[4] His little sisters, Blanche and Philippa, learnt reading from their book of A B C. Another governess, Dame Katherine Waterton, accompanied Blanche when, at the age of eight, she married Eric of Norway.

The succession of foreign consorts, Anne of Bohemia, the French Isabella and her younger sister, Katharine of Valois, Margaret of Anjou, all of whom brought to the Court followers of their own race, must have introduced some modifications of English custom, and kept to the fore the importance of studying at least the French language. Through the Earl of Salisbury the English Court came into touch with the noble Christine de Pisan, scholar and poetess and protagonist of intellectual liberty for women. Salisbury admired her works and offered to educate her young son, whom, at the age of thirteen (in 1398) he brought to England. On Salisbury's death Henry IV, who no doubt had also read compositions of such widespread renown, tried to induce Christina herself

[1] Wood, vol. iv, p. 37.
[2] *Test. Ebor*, vol. ii, p. 216 (1458).
[3] *Arch.* xx, p. 103.
[4] Wylie, loc. cit., p. 437.

to visit his Court; he took her son under his protection, sent two kings-at-arms to invite her to cross the seas, and promised her an ample maintenance. She declined his offer, with her usual independence of spirit, being disgusted at his conduct to Richard II, and recalled her son to Paris. Her books, however, were read by ladies at the English Court: Alice, Duchess of Suffolk, possessed a French rendering of La Cité des Dames.[1]

Katherine of Valois was not only a harp-player but had at any rate two volumes made for her use in England, a Book of the Passion, bound in cloth of gold, and a book of the Doctrine of the Maidens, in French, in quires of parchment.[2] Margaret of Anjou is said to have received her girlish training in Italy, at the court of her father, the King of Naples, but there is no hint that more advanced notions of women's education reached England by her means. She could write and many of her letters have survived, but her powerful personality was absorbed in the war and tumult of her husband's luckless reign.

The family of Edward the Fourth's queen had some literary taste; Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers, her brother, translated 'the Dictes and Sayngs of the Philosophers', printed by Caxton at Westminster in 1477. The Queen, soon after her accession, paid the large sum of ten pounds for a book;[3] she could probably read French, for she owned the *Romance of the Saint Grael*, as well as a copy of Caxton's earliest production, the *Recueil des Histoires de Troyes*.[4] Edward's sister, Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, was also one of Caxton's patronesses, and perhaps induced him to dedicate *The Game and Playe of the Chesse* to another of her brothers, the Duke of Clarence.[5] The young princesses, the daughters of Elizabeth Woodville, were educated with some care. A French book beautifully

[1] *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *Eighth Report*, Appendix, p. 629.

[2] *Sussex Archaeol. Collections*, vol. xxxvii, p. 175 (An Inventory of Queen Katherine's Wardrobe).

[3] Scofield, Edward IV, p. 452.

[4] Ames, *Typograph Antiq.*, i. 27. Scofield, p. 456.

written in a large Gothic hand, giving an account of the death, burial, and last testament of Sultan Amurath (who assaulted Constantinople in 1394), bears on the fly-leaf, apparently in autograph, 'Elizabeth, the Kynggs daughter boke, Cecyl the kynggs dowghter'; and the date, the 12th of September 1481. The board binding, covered with black leather, is stamped with fleur-de-lis. On one page there is a shield bearing the arms of France and England quartered, coloured and gilt, with a label of three points; on either side the shield an ostrich feather and snail are painted, and on the top of the page a brown butterfly and pansies on a gilt ground.[1] Other autographs of the Lady Cecilia, taken from books, are in existence. In Humphrey Brereton's 'Song of the Lady Bessy' she is represented as sharing the education of her elder sister Elizabeth, afterwards the wife of Henry VII. In reply to Earl Stanley, who proposes to send for a scribe to act as amanuensis, the Lady Bessy is made to say:

> Good Father Stanley, hearken to me
> What my father, King Edward, that king royal
> Did for my sister, my Lady Wells, and me.
> He sent for a scrivener to lusty London
> He was the best in that city
> He taught us both to read and write full soon; . . .
> Lauded be God, I had such speed
> That I can write as well as he,
> And also indite and full well read, . . .
> Both English, and also French,
> And also Spanish if you had need.[2]

Cecilia married John, Viscount Welles, and is said to have been at great pains to educate her own two children, Elizabeth and Anne.[3]

[1] *Hist. MSS. Comm., Sixth Report*, pp. 353 and 357 (Ingilby MSS.).

[2] The existing manuscript of this poem is in a hand-writing of Charles II. The mention of Spanish as a subject of study, at such an early date, throws doubt upon the genuineness of this passage. An epitaph to Elizabeth Lucar, educated some fifty years later, mentions Spanish, as well as Latin and Italian, among her acquirements; but the arrival of Catharine of Aragon had by 1510 brought that language into fashion.

[3] Wood, vol. iii, p. 423.

Needlework still held a foremost place among the occupations of noble and royal ladies, and hence in their training for life. Apart from the teaching available in the nunnery, and apprenticeship for the profession of embroideress, the art continued to be practised and learnt from hand to hand in those household groups which carried on the tradition from Saxon times. Such a group figures in Skelton's description of a chaplet of laurel embroidered in his honour under the direction of his patroness, the Countess of Surrey. Her Ladyship called together all the best embroideresses of her circle and they set to work, their white fingers among the silken skeins, to weave gay flowers and birds in bowers of raised needlework. The poet shows his knowledge of the details of their art and depicts the scene with great charm and vivacity:

> With that the tappettes and carpettes were layde
> Whereon these ladyes softely myght rest,
> The saumpler to sowe on, the lace to embrayde;
> To weave in the stole [stool] some were full prest
> With slaies,[1] with tavels,[2] with nedelles wel drest;
> The frame was brought forth with his weaving pin . . .
> Some to enbrowder put them in prease,
> Wel gyding their glotton[3] to kepe streight their silk,
> Some pyrling of golde their worke to encrease,
> With fingers smale and handes as white as mylk,
> With 'Reche me that skayne of tewly[4] sylke',
> And 'Wynde me that botoune of such an hewe,
> Grene, red, tawney, whyte, purple and blewe.'

The taste for embroidery was universal, shared by all English women, from the queen to the sempstress earning her livelihood by making badges for some noble household. Elizabeth Woodville, the first queen of English birth for many centuries, was an embroideress, as befitted

[1] A 'slay' is a 'weaver's reed', used for keeping the shuttle straight and the threads of the weft in position; cf. Wright, *Dial. Dict.*

[2] A tavel is the little wooden triangle which strikes the web on the weaver's frame (Littré).

[3] Probably for 'glutton', or gluten, used to secure the background of silk.

[4] Delicate, fine.

one who had received the ordinary education of a noblewoman's daughter; her household accounts record large purchases of Venice gold thread from Agnes Bretayn, a silkwoman. A letter of Agnes Paston to William Paston, announcing their son's betrothal, contained a postscript: 'I prey you do byen for me ij pypys of gold,'[1] and the same redoubtable lady, added to a letter about a new alliance for her much-tried daughter Elizabeth, a request for more embroidery silk.[2] About 1462, the household books of Sir John Howard of Stoke-by-Nayland, who had several young daughters—although they make no reference to any sort of literary education, mention the outlay upon black and white sewing silk, Venice gold and gold of Damascus.[3] Towards the close of the century a workwoman, one Margaret Bemewey, went to law to recover payment of 14*s.* due for making 'eighty bages of ravens hedys browdered' for the use of one John Norreys Esquire.[4] There are also at this time numerous and suggestive bequests of quaint implements of needlework, no doubt valued for their associations. Henry Holme of Beverley left to Alice St. Quentin 'a nedyll howse of rede welwytt',[5] while Elena Fulford of Ripon, apparently a professional embroideress, endowed Johanna Makwra with her stock-in-trade, 'le purfilling thred, crulez [crewels] and suyngthred, i faudencopstole [fald-stool], i bofetstole et totum cerecum [sericum] cum filo aureo'.[6]

6. *The Lady Margaret*

On the last verge of the Middle Ages stands a figure of transition, the Lady Margaret, Countess of Richmond, mother of King Henry VII, and in him of a line of princes remarkable for their gifts of intellect.

The education of the Lady Margaret shows no very

1 *Paston Letters*, vol. i, p. 39.
2 Ib., vol. i, p. 88.
3 *Manners and Household Expenses*, Roxburgh Club, 1841, pp. 300 and 415.
4 Early Chancery Proc. 191/8.
5 *Test. Ebor.* iii, p. 194 (1474).
6 Ib. ii, p. 164 (1453).

marked advance on what had gone before, on the traditions of generations of noble women. She had a good knowledge of French, as well as the capacity to read and write English, and she was a skilled embroideress; a carpet of her handiwork, embroidered with the arms of the St. John family, is said to have been preserved at Bletsoe as late as the reign of James I. She knew but little Latin and was conscious of her inadequate knowledge—as compared with the attainments of the younger generation of women. Bishop Fisher in his *Mornynge Remembrance* observed:

'Full often she complayned that in her youthe she had not given her to the understanding of Latin, wherein she had a lytell perceyving, specyally of the Rubryshe of the Ordynall for the saying of her servyce, which she did well understand.' [1]

Her keen perception of the importance for students of the activity of the printing press constitutes one of her chief claims to the patronage of learning. The encouragement she gave to William Caxton, both as a printer and translator, is well-known. Caxton's *Hystorye of Kynge Blanchardyne and Queen Eglantyne, his wyfe*, was translated into English at her request, about 1489.[2] If she regretted her lack of scholarly training, she was too much the child of her age, the daughter of a race of romance lovers, to fail in appreciation of this branch of literature. She had long possessed a French copy of Kynge Blanchardyne, originally purchased from Caxton, and knew as well as he 'that the storye of hit was honeste and joyefulle to all vertuouse young noble gentylmen and wymmen for to rede therein as for their passe-tyme'. Among her own books and manuscripts, works of history, poetry and fiction were included: she had

'A greate volume of velom covered with blake velvet which is the secunde volume of Froysart.

A greatte volume of velom named John Bokas [Boccaccio], lymned, and a grette volume of the Siege of Troye yn Englissh.

[1] C. E. Cooper, *Lady Margaret*, p. 5.
[2] Cooper, loc. cit., p. 45.

V. THE LADY MARGARET BEAUFORT

From a painting in the National Portrait Gallery

'The Countess Margaret was probably the most accomplished lady in academic knowledge in England in the Middle Ages', p. 107

A booke of velom of Gower in Englisshe.
A booke of velom of Canterbury Tales in Englische.
A prynted booke which is called Magna Carta in French.'[1]

Her bookish tastes were recognized by her family: Ann, Duchess of Buckingham, bequeathed her a Legend of the Saints in English, a French book, Lucan, Suetonius, and Sallust (published in Paris in 1413), and a French copy of the Epistles and Gospels.[2]

Her next literary enterprise, suited to the mother of a king, was the compilation of 'Ordinances and reformations of apparel for princes and estates, with other ladies and gentlewomen, for the time of mourning' (1493).[3] Finally she made it a constant duty to encourage the study specially appropriate to women, that of practical piety. In 1494, Walter Hylton's *Scala Perfectionis*, in English, was printed in folio at Caxton's House by Wynkyn de Worde, and some stanzas at the end of the book explained its origin:

> The kynges moder of excellent bounte . . .
> This myghty pryncesse hath commanded me
> T'emprynt this boke, her grace for to deserve.[4]

In 1507 she herself rendered from the French the *Mirroure of Golde for the sinfull soule*.[5]

The services she thus rendered to the cause of literature and learning by liberal patronage of the new art were of their nature greater than any her predecessors had given or had been in a position to give. She did not indeed stand alone. Queens before her had been patronesses of learned institutions; the queens of the Red and White Rose, Margaret of Anjou and Elizabeth Woodville, had founded jointly Queens' College, Cambridge.[6] Noble ladies in a lesser degree had extended their bounty to poor students;

[1] Cooper, loc. cit., p. 132.
[2] Ballard, *Celebrated Ladies of Britain*, p. 13.
[3] Cooper, loc. cit., p. 52.
[4] Ib., p. 55.
[5] Ib., p. 108.
[6] *Enc. Brit.*, art. Cambridge.

the bequest of Joan de Burghersh, Lady de Mohun, is a case in point. In her will she left: 'To the three poor scolar boys, Robert Payn, John Tewe, and litel Will,' food and clothing for a year, if they wished to remain under tuition in Canterbury.[1] But the bounty of the Lady Margaret exceeded all these and was marked by a personal enthusiasm which, in the case of the other foundresses, is less evident, if it may be only hidden in the mists of time.

The earliest mention of her connexion with the University of Cambridge is merely a record of the delicacies presented by the town to the illustrious visitor,[2] but the spices and comfits, the ipocras and venison reaped a substantial interest. In 1496 came the foundation of Jesus College, Cambridge, where the name of the Lady Margaret is still mentioned in the prayers of the Master and Fellows.[3] In the same year two perpetual readers in holy theology, one at each University, were endowed by the mother of the king;[4] in 1505 there followed the foundation of Christ's College, Cambridge, where, as a mark of special interest, she had chambers reserved for her use.[5] Of her outstanding ability there can be no question; but it is in the recollection that she was born under a happy star, into a world new tingling with the passion of learning, that one may accept the dictum of Professor Foster Watson, 'the Countess Margaret was probably the most accomplished lady in academic knowledge in England in the Middle Ages'.[6]

6. *Some Women's Books of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*

Facts about the method of women's education in these centuries are so scanty that evidence of acquirement becomes itself of value, that is evidence of some apparent

[1] *Somerset Medieval Wills*, Series II, p. 303 (1404).
[2] Cooper, loc. cit., p. 46 (1489). [3] Ib., p. 58.
[4] Ib., p. 60. [5] Ib., p. 101.
[6] *Dict. of Education*, ed. Foster Watson, art. Education of Girls.

ability to read English, French, and Latin; evidence of the store set by women upon books handed down from parent to daughter or from friend to friend; evidence too of the intellectual range of those books, the ideas, the attitude towards life, set out in them. If one title occurs frequently in any given period it is a fair deduction that the work was popular, and copies prized and sought after.

Contemporary testaments are one principal source of information about women's books; between 1380 and 1500 legacies of books to and by women are frequent, especially in the North and North Midlands. The owners are for the most part wives and daughters of noble houses or of wealthy landed proprietors. The wills of burgesses in London, and large towns like Bristol and Norwich, contain scanty references to books; they leave behind to their daughters trade equipment not volumes of romance; the women-folk are seen taking part in a vigorous commercial life, the girls qualifying themselves by apprenticeship to enter their father's business.

To possess a book may be no guarantee of the power of the owner to understand, even to read it. But many modern writers are so fearful of exaggerating the acquirements of capable women of past ages that they go to the other extreme and minimize the evidence available. When women are often picked out to be legatees of a much-prized and strictly limited library, the presumption is that they were known to care for books; it is improbable that the majority of the recipients were illiterate and the legacy welcomed solely for its velvet cover and filigree clasps. 'A masse book, and alle the bokes that I have of latyn, englisch and frensch I leave to my daughter-in-law Johane,' says the Will of Lady Alice West (1395);[1] Robert, Lord de Roos, in 1392, out of his collection of some seven or eight volumes chiefly in French, left all with the exception of a psalter to his wife, daughters, and a woman-friend.[2] It may be taken for granted that many women

[1] *Earliest Eng. Wills*, E.E.T.S., p. 4.
[2] *Test. Ebor.* i, p. 179.

of good position could read in more than one language, and the rest were not unwilling to be read to; the book of devotion, the volume of romance, the great history was familiar inside as out. Hints here and there bear out the assumption. The bequest of Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester, to her daughter Johanne (1399) was 'a book with the psalter, primer and other devotions, with two clasps of gold enamelled with my arms, *which book I have often used*'.[1] In a less exalted rank of life, the Venetian, in his *Relation of the Island of England* (1500), describes the women he saw daily attending mass with long rosaries in their hands; any who could read recited the Office of Our Lady, bringing the book and taking verse about with some companion, as churchmen do.[2]

There is much sameness about the numerous legacies of devotional books, psalters, primers, pocket breviaries, books called 'le bibel;' but at some points they deserve our attention.

The written book has one advantage over the printed that it can be made the expression of personal and individual taste. The gift of a breviary, made specially for her use, marked a girl's admission to fuller Church privilege. Chance has preserved the account of one such book, given on the Feast of the Purification to the 'Domisella Alianore', Eleanor de Montfort, only daughter of the Countess of Leicester, afterwards married to Llewellyn Prince of Wales. Twenty strips of fine vellum were bought in London, and 14*s*. paid at Oxford to Friar G. Boyon who supervised both the purchase of material and the writing of the book.[3] A fifteenth-century Latin service-book, among the Ingilby MSS., a large octavo volume bound in limp vellum and adorned in the margins with birds and men's heads beautifully drawn, was given by Elizabeth Hull, Abbess of Malling, to her god-child Margaret, heiress of Sir Thomas Nevile; at the end, the story of the girl's patron-saint,

[1] Will of Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester; Nicholas, *Test. Vet.*, p. 140.
[2] *Relation of the Island of England*, Camd. Soc., 1847, p. 23.
[3] *Manners and Household Expenses*, Roxburghe Club, 1841.

St. Margaret, is written in English verse.[1] A large Primer, bequeathed, also to a god-daughter, by William Revetour, Chaplain of York in 1446, contained designs in the Flemish style.[2] Books so large and finely illuminated were unsuited for daily use, to be carried to church in all weathers; hence, one may imagine, the 'best' and 'second' primers and matins-books so often referred to. A sentimental value naturally attached to devotional books which had been for some generations in a family; in 1392 Katerine de Roos, a nun, received 'a little psalter that was her mother's',[3] and twenty years earlier the Sub-Dean of Wells left to Christina Coram his Manual, bound in boards for constant use, which had belonged to her mother.[4] For some much-prized books the owners even in death tried to ensure safe-keeping, as when in 1455 Elizabeth D'Arcy left her portiforium and great psalter to the Chapel of Heyning's Priory, with instructions to have them fastened with a chain.[5] Under the Will of Cecily, Duchess of York, who could write a little and must therefore have been able to read, the College of St. Anthony inherited her antiphoner 'with the ruelles of musik in the later ynd'. How often had she not turned to those very pages when the children began to sing.[6]

Apart from Service Books, the women's books known to us deal with two great interests: religion and romance. The religious books include treatises on the hidden life of the soul, sermons, biographies, and legends of the Saints. Legacies to daughters in religion usually fall into this category; the daughters destined for court-life received the romances.

The subject of books in convent-libraries has been dealt with so recently and so fully by Dr. Eileen Power that it will suffice here to give a few additional examples of the kind

1 *Hist. MSS. Comm., Sixth Report*, p. 288.
2 *Test. Ebor.* ii, p. 117.
3 *Test. Ebor.*, i, p. 179.
4 *Hist. MSS. Comm., Third Report*, p. 350.
5 *Early Lincs. Wills*, p. 117.
6 *Wills from Doctors' Commons*, Camd. Soc., 1863, p. 3.

of books which passed into their keeping from lay hands. Among the books preserved at Stonyhurst College is a Latin psalter with an inscription also in Latin describing it as the gift of Letice, Lady de Kaynes, to Tarrant Keynes Abbey: 'Hoc est Psalterium Beatae Mariae super Tharente . . .[1] Quicunque istud abstulerit, sive defraudare studuerit, anathema sit.' Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester, left to her daughter Isabel, a Minoress, in 1299, a French Bible, in two volumes, with two gold clasps bearing the arms of France. Another nun's Bible, still in existence, has a special interest as being an early English translation of the New Testament, in its original pigskin binding with clasps and bosses. The text is preceded by a table for finding 'the pistles and gospels that ben rad in the Churche after the use of Salisburie', and within the cover is written the owner's name, 'Katherine Methwold, Monaca'.[2]

A copy, made about 1430–60, of *Grâce-Dieu* or *Pèlerinage de l'Ame*, by Guillaume de Guilevile—a very favourite woman's book—was the gift of Dame Agnes Ratcliffe to the Monastery of Marrick, and has many beautiful illuminations painted on a gold ground; the greater excommunication of a book-thief is written in Latin on a fly-leaf, and the name of the owner, or possibly of the convent librarian, 'Isabell Lumley'.[3]

In 1412 we hear of the legacy of another popular work, *Apocalypse*, to Markby Abbey, and several nunneries benefited under the Will of Agnes, Lady Stapilton (1448);[4] she had many books and left one apiece to the Abbess of Denny (*unum librum de Frensshe*), and the nuns of Arthington (*Prik of Conscience*), Aissheholt [Esholt] (*Chastisying of goddes-children*), Sinningthwaite (*Bonaventure*), and Nun Monkton (*Vice and Vertues*).

Towards the end of the fifteenth century, the frequent

[1] *Hist. MSS. Comm. Second Report*, p. 144.
[2] Ib., *Third Report*, p. 112.
[3] Ib., *Sixth Report*, p. 288.
[4] *North Country Wills*, vol. i, p. 48.

legacies, to nuns and lay-women, of lives of St. Katharine in English (e.g. to Swine Priory, 1485[1]) is noteworthy; it was probably St. Catharine of Siena (d. 1347) whose history was thus becoming familiar to Englishwomen. This is definitely stated in the Will of Cecily, Duchess of York, who left to her granddaughter, Bridget, daughter of Edward IV, three very delightful works, the 'boke of Legenda Aurea in velem, a boke of the life of Saint Kateryn of Sene, a boke of Saint Matilde', who had also been an English king's daughter.[2] From Duchess Cecily's Will may be gleaned a fragment of information about the lost books in the nuns' library at Syon, for her daughter Anne de la Pole, the Prioress, received a book of Bonaventure, Hilton's *Scala Perfectionis* in the original English and a book of the Revelations of Saint Bridget, foundress, of her house.

The gift of a Missal, in 1523, to Elizabeth Langrege, 'Mynchynne' of Romsey, illustrates the time-honoured practice of family attachments to certain monastic houses. Elizabeth was great-niece to Dame Anne Westbroke, a former abbess who had once owned the book. Among its contents was a calendar with miniatures of rural operations appropriate to the months.[3]

On the subject of religious books in the possession of lay-women little more need be said: a representative list, familiar alike to convent and manor house, has already been given. A 'book of Englyssh cleped "pore caytife" '—a collection of sermons on the creed and commandments—was bequeathed to a woman-friend by Lady Peryne Clanbowe in 1422.[4] A set of books belonging to Eleanor Purdeley, a widow and a London woman (1433), included St. Patrick's Purgatory, the story of Joseph and Alcuin's sermons.[5]

1 *Test. Ebor.* iii, p. 165 note.
2 *Wills from Doctors' Commons*, Camd. Soc., 1863, p. 2.
3 *Hist. MSS. Comm., Eighth Report*, App., p. 234 (College of Physicians).
4 *Earliest English Wills*, E.E.T.S. (1882), p. 50.
5 Ib., p. 2.

In the fourteenth century Elizabeth Countess of Salisbury owned a splendid copy of the *Historia Scholastica* in French, finely illuminated, taken from King John of France at the Battle of Poitiers; this, in her last will, she ordered to be sold for forty livres.[1]

Another illuminated book of great historic interest is the *Annotations upon the Ecclesiastes*, bearing the initials A and H, and the motto of Anne Boleyn, 'the most happy', which may be the very volume of prayers given by that luckless queen, before her execution, to her maid of honour.[2]

Among the earliest secular books noted in possession of a woman is a French Bestiary, left in 1349 by Henry Lord Percy to his daughter Isabella;[3] it is possibly the same book which is still in the Duke of Northumberland's collection, written in the thirteenth century and containing over a hundred pictures of beasts, birds, fishes and reptiles, fully described, with a religious moral. On the fly-leaf a woman's name is written twice, in a hand of the seventeenth century, 'Grace Fitz James feres God and loves his word.'[4]

The first example of a romance is the *Romance of Merlin* (1334)[5] owned by Katharine de Hales: others have been noted in the following order of date:

Tristrem; Lanchelot Book of Romance.[7]	1380[6]	Elizabeth, Lady la Zouche. Purchased for one hundred marks from Isabella de Lancaster, Nun of Amesbury, by Edward III.
A book of ancient histories (French)	1392[8]	Joan, Wife of Robert de Roos.
Sydrak (French)	1392[9]	Elizabeth de Stapleton.

[1] *Cat. Vet. Lib. Dur.*, Surtees Soc., 7 (1838), p. xxviii. The illustration facing p. 43 is taken from this MS.

[2] *Hist. MSS. Comm., Third Report*, p. 113.

[3] *Test. Ebor.* i, p. 59.

[4] *Hist. MSS. Comm., Third Report*, p. 112.

[5] *Catalogue of the Muniments in Berkeley Castle*, Jeayes, 1892, cf. *supra*, p. 61.

[6] *Early Lincoln Wills*, p. 91.

[7] Devon, *Issues of the Exchequer*, p. 144.

[8] *Test. Ebor.* i. 179.

[9] Ib., p. 180.

A French book of the Duke of Lancaster 1394[1]	Isabella Percy.
Romauns called Bruyt 1398[2]	Margaret Ughtred.
A book of Meistre Histories 1399[3]	Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester.
Tristrem (French) 1405[4]	Johanne le Scrop.
Gower 1431[5]	Joan, Countess of Westmoreland.
A Book of Romance, beginning 'Decem Preceptis Alembes'	Johanna, Lady Hilton.
Romanse de Septem Sages 1432[6]	
A Book of Romans called L'eschell de Reson; Sainz Ryall; Lanselake 1435[7]	Elizabeth D'Arcy.
Launcelot (French) 1438[8]	Isabelle Eure.
Gyron le Curtasse (in French, two books) 1446[9]	Alice, Countess of Salisbury.
Trolias (English) 1458[10]	Elena Marshall.
Giles, de Regimine Principum (French) 1467[11]	Anne Bohun.
Canterbury Tales 1471[12]	Elizabeth Lady Bruyn.

Alice, Countess of Suffolk, granddaughter of the poet Chaucer, carried with her to Ewelme a good library of books, including 'A Frensh boke of Temps Pastour, conteyning divers stories, in rede lether, bossed and clamped with laton . . . a frensh boke of La Cite des Dames . . . a boke of English, in paper, of ye pilgrymage, translated by dom John Lydgate out of frensh, covered with blak lether . . .'[13]

[1] Ib., p. 202. [2] Ib., p. 243. [3] Nicholas, *Test. Vet.*, p. 148.
[4] *Test. Ebor.* i, p. 339. [5] Ib., ii, p. 14.
[6] Ib., p. 24. [7] *Early Lincoln Wills*, p. 117.
[8] *Wills and Inventories*, Part I, Surtees Soc., 1835, p. 84.
[9] *Test. Ebor.* ii, p. 123. [10] Ib., p. 218. [11] Ib. iv, p. 102.
[12] *Essex Arch. Soc. Trans.*, N.S., vol. ii, 1884.
[13] *Hist. MSS. Comm., Eighth Report*, p. 629. For the books kept (1450) 'In the Stewe hous' at Castre (cf. *Paston Letters*), see ib., p. 268.

VII

AT BORDE AND SCOLE

1. *Placing Out*

A RECOGNIZED system of education or 'advancement' for girls, according to their station in life, grew up gradually in England during the fifteenth century. After the Reformation, when there were no longer nunneries to assist in the disposal of large families of daughters, the system was in some respects altered: but generally speaking, from the disappearance of the feudal household or petty court until the era of the boarding-school, educational practice was fairly well defined. A girl usually received a brief preliminary training at least in the elements of religion and of reading and writing, and then, at an age which varied between seven and twelve years, her feet were set by parent or guardian upon some avenue likely to promise her 'advancement'. This avenue might be the life of religion, in which case the whole training was best given in the nunnery itself; it was sometimes given there deliberately to encourage a sense of vocation when the age of profession was reached. Usually, advancement for a girl meant an advantageous marriage as early as possible. In that case, after instruction at home in manners and needlecraft under a resident governess, and in music, dancing, and French under visiting tutors, or in reading and the elements of religion at some little school, the girl was provided with a mistress; in her household she remained until, about the age of fourteen or fifteen, a suitable husband was found for her. These stages are to be regarded only as indications of a recognized scheme of upbringing. The preliminary stage might be prolonged, or might be altogether omitted; 'advancement' might take the form of domestic service, of apprenticeship to a trade, or to housewifery, often only distinguishable from ordinary servanthood by the presence of indentures; a girl might be either a waiting-

maid in some relative's household, or a gentlewoman in the service of some high-born dame; at the head of the scale, service at Court, an appointment as one of the Queen's maids, was the goal of ambition. Marriage, again, might in earliest childhood, almost in babyhood, decide a girl's future, and put her in the control of her husband's family, or it might be delayed till the poor maid took a downward step and wedded beneath her, or became a household drudge.

The question of girl-apprenticeship, in the formal sense, is elsewhere fully dealt with; the other phases of training may be further illustrated; their importance educationally is that they led on the one hand to the gradual development of girls' boarding-schools of two distinct types, on the other to a particular mode of instruction chiefly in handicraft, for children of ill-endowed parents. Throughout the period, for boys and girls alike, there is a growing recognition of the necessity for some kind of preparation for life and of the parent's duty to provide it.

'For Goddes sake,' wrote Sir John Hedlam of Nunthorpe in 1461 to the trusty friends his executors, 'do this for my childer whiche is most in my mynde of any erthly thing. . . . As for my lyvelode I will my neldest son have it. And as for my nother guddes I will beseke you as my trust is in you to se my gudis that leves aftir my dettis paid to tender my childer ther with and to helpe to holde tham to the scule . . . for thei have no nother gudes to keep them with bot if God will of his mercy prefer them . . .'[1]

'Lernyng,' together with meat, drink, and clothing, was regarded as part of the 'necessarie fyndyng' of wards;[2] about 1515 the guardian of John Amere's orphan-children complained that by default of their stepfather, Rawlen Parnell, they were likely not only to lose their little patrimony but 'for lacke of good educacon to be utterly undone'.[3]

Affection and anxious foresight are not, however, those

[1] *Test. Ebor.*, vol. ii, p. 247.
[2] Case of Fynys, Early Chancery Proceedings 417/8.
[3] Case of Amere, Early Chancery Proceedings, Series II, 1/112.

characteristics of English parenthood which contemporary records most often present. Children were treated with an extreme severity. The rod and the blow were essential parts of home as well as of school discipline. Dame Agnes Paston wrote to her son's tutor not to spare the lash;[1] in another class of society Chaucer speaks of the 'maydechild' who came in company with the merchant's wife, 'which as her list she may governe and guide, For yet under the yerde was the mayde'.[2] The Good Wife bade her daughter:

> If thi children been rebel and wole not hem lowe,
> If ony of hem mysdoo nouther banne hem ne blowe,
> But take a smert rodde and bete hem on a row
> Till thei crie mercy and be of her gilt aknowe.[3]

The hard and commercial spirit of the English towards their boys and girls, and their apparent lack of affection, seems to have impressed the more emotional foreigner:

'After having kept them at home', says the Venetian in his Relation of the Island of England, 'till they arrive at the age of seven or nine years at the utmost, they put them out, both males and females, to hard service in the houses of other people, binding them generally for another seven or nine years. And these are called apprentices and during that time they perform all the most menial offices, and few are born who are exempted from this fate, for every one, however rich he may be, sends away his children into the houses of others whilst he in return receives those of strangers into his own. And on inquiring their reason for this severity, they answered that they did it in order that their children might learn better manners . . . if the English sent their children away from home to learn virtue and good manners and took them back again when their apprenticeship was over, they might perhaps be excused; but they never return, for the girls are settled by their patrons and the boys make the best marriages they can.'

This custom the Venetian attributes to mere love of good living; a stranger's child can be fed more cheaply than

[1] *Paston Letters*, vol. i, Letter 311, p. 422.

[2] *Shipmannes Tale*, l. 1285.

[3] *How the Good Wiff taughte hir doughter*, E.E.T.S., Babees Book, p. 46, l. 188 et seq.

a son or daughter; a conclusion not flattering to national pride.[1]

A detailed study has shown the truth of many of the Venetian's statements in regard of girls formally apprenticed. They were drawn from every class, they were bound for inordinate periods, even up to twenty years; they frequently left home for good when scarcely in their teens, and were betrothed and married from their master's house. Something remains to be said about girls placed out without the protection and check of enrolment and release. Children of citizens were best off, their guardians had to give surety before the Mayor and Aldermen to treat them well. In other cases a legal agreement was sometimes entered upon where ordinary maintenance and education were in question. In pursuance of the will of Thomas Stonor (1432), Richard Drayton and his wife Alice signed a bond to provide for his daughter Isabella Stonor, until the end of her thirteenth year, 'in victu et vestitu ac doctrina.'[2]

Poor folk's children were cast upon the world at the mercy of strangers while scarcely more than babies. We read (*c.* 1470) of one Johanna Style, 'a may-child' of seven years, brought into court on an action of trespass; the case was dismissed and her mistress, Agnes Manfield, a widow, was arrested on the same plea.[3] Little Helen Constune, the nine-year old daughter of Laurence Constune, a very poor man, was 'given' to one William Betnam a tallow-chandler, for so long as she would stay. Betnam subsequently desired Richard Lee, a conductor of the Chapel of St. Stephen, Westminster, to take her as his own. When Helen went to Lee she was poorly clad, but he clothed her 'honestly' and kept her a year as his little servant, after which Betnam, observing her improved condition, did his best to get her back again.[4] Children

1 *A Relation of the Island of England*, Camd. Soc., 1847, p. 24.
2 *Stonor Letters*, Camd. Soc., Series III, 1919, vol. xxix, p. 50.
3 Early Chancery Proceedings, i. 46/84.
4 Ib. v. 474/58.

so young and untrained naturally made poor servants, their great merit being their cheapness.[1]

The practice of tutorship is most readily studied in the case of orphan wards, although they were not the only children to be 'placed out' definitely for purposes of education. Testators constantly made provision for the good education and preferment of their young daughters, and indicated with whom the responsibility was to rest. Often the children were entrusted to their mother's care; sometimes to long-suffering relations. Cuthbert Blount, a merchant of Newcastle, bequeathed his six children for tuition each to a different member of his family.[2] Alderman William Carre of Newcastle desired his step-father, mother, brother, nephew, son-in-law, and 'Ante Thomlingson' that 'etche of them will be so good as to take one of my childer, suche as they can best fantaisie, to bring them up in the faithe and fear of God and as ther owne, to whom I will gyve them as frelye as God haith sente or geaven them to me'.[3] If it seemed doubtful whether the legatee first named would accept the gift so freely bestowed, suggestions were often made who might next be approached. So wrote a Newcastle tailor, providing for every contingency:

'My doughter Eleonor I give to my well-beloved frend Jean Barker; *if she will not take hir*, I give her franklye unto hir godmother, Eleonor Nicholson.'[4]

Education was certainly expected of the adoptive relative, but to be 'at borde and scole' with a stranger was perhaps considered more advantageous. It was unfortunately often coupled with business arrangements of a kind that opened the way to innumerable abuses. In lieu of definite payment the small fortune of the child was often lent to the guardian to trade with until she reached years

[1] For a description of child-servants (1641) see *Letters of Brilliana Lady Harley*, Camd. Soc., 1853, p. 132.

[2] *Wills and Inventories*, Surtees Soc., 1906, vol. iii, p. 19 (1559).

[3] Ib., 1835, Part I, pp. 383–4 (1572).

[4] Ib., 1906, vol. iii, p. 148 (1589).

of discretion. Peter Hanley in 1581 left his daughter Kateryne to the care of one Robert Skaife, together with 'the occupation of £20 during her minority'.[1] Thomas Whipp, a London draper, desired Peter Man, his cousin, to keep his daughter and trade with her portion.[2] Thomas Bolton of Kirkby Masham left £10 to his youngest sister, Margery, to be given her on her wedding day or at the age of twenty-eight, 'the said some to be putt in the meane time into the handes of Mr. Prance, her master'.[3]

These financial transactions were a frequent cause of law proceedings against unprincipled guardians, and cannot have helped towards establishing happy relationships or surrounding the forlorn child with disinterested affection and care.

Whoever the 'tutors', they were definitely expected to arrange for the ward's education; often they seem to have undertaken the teaching themselves. Mary Sheldon, in the reign of Edward VI, was left to her widowed mother's care, with a portion of four hundred marks, that she might be 'governed, brought up and married'; she was 'put out' to John and Alice Fox and by them 'honestly and frendly instructed, nurtured and taught'.[4] Sir Edmund Molineux's daughters, Katheryn and Dorothe, in 1551, were placed with a cousin, George Browne, and his wife, to be brought up in 'vertue, good manners and lerning to playe the gentlewomen and good huswyffes, to dress meat and oversee their households'.[5] Dorothie and Jane Parrott, with their brother Thomas, went to school with some people called Stephynton. For some four years the agreed fees were paid regularly by their kinsman, Sir John Parrott; then payment ceased, because Sir John considered the guardians had used the children 'as servants to do all the vilest business in their house', an abuse to which putting-out, like apprenticeship, was

1 *Knaresborough Wills*, vol. i, p. 141.
2 *North Country Wills*, Surtees Soc., 1912, vol. ii, p. 25.
3 Ib., p. 190 (1600).
4 Star Cham. Ed. VI, Bundle XX, 94.
5 *North Country Wills*, Surtees Soc., vol. i, p. 229.

always liable. The Stephyntons, in self-defence, maintained that the little Parrotts had, on the contrary, been educated in a way befitting their birth. The daughters they explained, 'are broughte uppe in writinge, readinge, sewinge, both white worke and blacke worke, and playenge of the lute and virginalls, as yonge gentlewomen and maydes of theire ages are accustomed. Thomas hathe alwayes bene and dailye is broughte up in learnynge at the Gramerschole . . . the children for their yeares do well come forewarde. . . .'[1] Boarded-out children sometimes attended a day-school. In the reign of Philip and Mary there is the case of a Somersetshire girl Anne Evory boarded with people who were supposed to have used her ill. They pleaded in defence that she was not put to drudgery as a servant but 'fared and dieted at board with them and educated and brought up at school and to the use of her needle'.[2]

An orphan girl called Thomasyn Wolters, who had house property in Sandwich which produced a rental of over £10 a year, was sent in April 1591 to finish her education with a Mrs. Smythe in Canterbury. She had previously boarded in Sandwich, with William Even, a brewer, and his wife, who gave her some sort of instruction separately charged in their account: 'For necessaries laied oute aboute her and teaching her . . . xxx*s*.' In preparation for the sojourn in Canterbury, she had a new outfit; a gown well stiffened, linen 'nickerchiefs' trimmed with lace, coifs with strings. Needlework and knitting stockings formed the chief part of Mistress Smythe's curriculum. Thread, cambric, and yarn for Thomasyn to work upon were constantly sent over from Sandwich. She had regular terms, going home for the Christmas holidays with Bumford the carrier and returning on the 2nd January with a shilling in her purse. She remained two years at school at a fee of £8 a year, and on leaving bought a sampler of Mrs. Smythe for twelve pence, with which to

[1] Early Chancery Proceedings, ii. 167/88.
[2] Court of Requests, Bundle 25/247.

practise her skill. By this time she had learned also to make pillow-lace, and silk-embroidery. The purchase of a bone thimble is duly recorded, but the only book named is a prayer-book containing all the service and the singing psalms. During her schooldays she attended weddings, the fair and a play, wearing her taffeta hat and peach-coloured petticoat. From time to time as a grown-up young lady she visited her old mistress, the last occasion being on the eve of her marriage, to buy her trousseau.[1]

The Orphans' Book of Sandwich contains other references to girls' education, but none which gives so vivid a picture. For instance, Robert Wild's daughter was boarded with the wife of William May, who was paid ten shillings for a quarter's 'Scholinge, Shoes and a flanell wastcote', and for a book to teach her to read. Even in a small country town girls' upbringing was thus not entirely disregarded.[2]

Nor is there wanting evidence that girls were occasionally sent to be educated abroad. The Lisle Correspondence, like the Paston Letters, preserves the record, full of vivacity and character, of a group of persons who are the very embodiment of their age; and with the rest a detailed picture of the education of the Basset sisters, destined in their beauty and gaiety to shine among the dark places and vile hypocrisies of Henry VIII's Court after the divorce of Queen Catherine. Anne and Mary Basset were the step-daughters of Arthur Plantagenet, Viscount Lisle, a natural son of Edward IV, by his marriage with the widowed Honor, Lady Basset; the union brought into quasi-relationship five families of children by previous marriages, most of them daughters. It is clear that her husband's connexion with the reigning house stimulated Lady Lisle's ambition; and she determined that two or three of her daughters should find places about the Court. In November 1533 she sent Anne, the eldest,

[1] *Sandwich Book of Orphans* (reprinted from Arch. Cantiana 1885), p. 4 et seq.
[2] Ib., p. 22.

to be educated in France, under Jenne de Saveuzes, Madame de Riou, wife of the Sieur de Riou, who lived in the state of a small landowner at Pont-de-Remy;[1] a year later Mary Basset went to Madame de Riou's sister, Anne de Rouault, Madame de Bours, in her château of Gaissart in the neighbourhood of Abbeville.[2] This was probably an unusual method of schooling, for it aroused much interest in their circle of acquaintances. A vigorous correspondence, over a period of four years, gives on the whole a pleasant impression of the relationship between the lady-mistresses and the young girls they treated 'as their own'. A constant exchange of presents kept the intercourse of guardians and parents from sinking to a business level. Goshawks, greyhounds, and horses sent by Lord and Lady Lisle to the Sieur de Riou added zest to the hunting in which their daughters, no doubt, took part; the housewives exchanged delicacies, 'confitures de cornouilles,' a confection unknown in England, preserves of cherries and prunes, even salmon, a barrel of herring, cases of sardines; sometimes also relics of healing virtue, the girdle of St. Rose or the head of St. John to put in a cabinet.[3] The French family ingenuously disclaimed all desire for remuneration, but were in fact paid substantial school-fees, although somewhat irregularly, as Lord Lisle's allowances reached him at the King's pleasure.

Mary was the more beautiful, clever, and attractive of the two sisters, Anne the more dependable, though full of generous impulses; both were affectionate, devoted to their home, but content for the time being to spend a few happy not over-studious years in France. Mary declared she liked the country so well, if she could but see her mother frequently she would never care to return to England.[4]

In the family circles which they had entered, the girls learnt to speak French more rapidly than to write it with

[1] Gairdner, *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII*, vol. vi, 1432 (p. 573), Nov. 15, 1533.
[2] Ib., vol. vii, 1052.
[3] Ib., vol. x, 542.
[4] Ib., vol. x, p. 467.

correctness; but they corresponded with their mother in French of a certain sort, and after four years' absence, Anne seems almost to have forgotten how to write her native language, if indeed she had ever been able to use her pen fluently.

Great attention was paid to music. Anne learned to play upon a pair of virginals sent from England by Lord Lisle; Mary studied lute, virginal, and spinet; when the de Riou family moved for safety to Abbeville, on account of the disturbed state of the kingdom, a new teacher was found for her. She also wrote to her mother to beg for ten crowns 'to buy a beautiful regall in this town. This instrument lasts long. If I thought you disliked my request I would beg you not to comply with it.'[1]

For a fee of only ten sous, a schoolmaster, a priest, came to teach her reading and writing.[2] Consignments of gold-thread, and little gifts of silk purses to Lady Lisle, show that the usual teaching of embroidery was not omitted, and Madame de Bours and her sister were well equipped to impart a knowledge of confectionery. They kept also in mind the future social position of their charges; the girls paid educational visits among their friends, to learn good manners and widen their knowledge of the world. Anne accompanied Madame de Riou on a journey eight leagues away, saw the sights, including 'The Holy Tear of Our Lord', and was introduced to pleasant society, where she was thought handsome and 'de bonne sorte'.[3] Mary went to Amiens for Shrovetide with Madame de Bours' daughter; but the fields were so 'infested by adventurers' it was somewhat difficult to find her an escort home. She was also taken to Court, and allowed, for the occasion, to lay aside the complimentary mourning she wore for the death of M. de Bours.

Dress and ornament fill a prominent place in the correspondence; Anne begs for little pearls to put on her rings; an embroidered robe is made for Mary in Paris; the

[1] Gairdner, *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII*, vol. xii, 1204.
[2] Ib., vol. x, 466 (p. 191). [3] Ib., vol. x, 455.

messenger 'Jean Semy' (John Smith) is constantly occupied in carrying to and fro requisitions for the young ladies. Of any serious moral or religious instruction there is no mention, unless the 'gospel' which Mary sent to Lady Lisle, to 'carry with her paternosters', and the money required for her devotions, can be taken to show that it was not overlooked.

On the whole Anne came best out of her sojourn in France. Mary was gay and impressionable, and the influence of Madame de Bours' household was in many respects unsuitable. She acquired a taste for gambling, was ashamed to disclose her debts, and wrote surreptitiously to her sisters for shoes to replace a pair she had lost to her serving-maid at play; Lady Lisle felt matters were going beyond the bounds of prudence and sent a warning letter to Madame de Bours:

'My daughter has written to one of her sisters to be mean for her to owe money to play. I am content that she play when ye shall command her; but I fear she shall give her mind too much to play. *It will come soon enough.* I would she should ply her work, the lute and virginalls, but I refer it all to your goodness.' [1]

Her confidence was in fact misplaced. When schooltime lay behind and her family came upon evil days, Mary Basset confessed that within two years of her arrival in France, Gabriel de Montmorency, Sieur de Bours, her guardians' son, had fallen in love with her; on her return to Calais in 1539 he gave her sleeves of yellow velvet, and, the Lent following, a letter and a primer with his name on it. On Palm Sunday, unknown to her friends and without the King's consent, she entered with him into a contract of marriage.[2] It was a conclusion to which the system of 'placing-out' not infrequently, perhaps not unnaturally, led.

The Bassets were not the only English girls to receive their training, for good or ill, abroad. Some years later

[1] Gairdner, *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII*, vol. ix. 768 (p. 260).
[2] Ib., vol. xv. 750.

a daughter of the Countess of Sussex was educated in the Seigneur de Marchaumont's family at Poissy.[1]

The most outstanding, perhaps the most deterrent example at once of foreign schooling and of that education in Courts which the Reformers denounced, was the luckless Anne Boleyn. When only seven years old in 1514 she went to France in the train of Mary, sister of Henry VIII, who for eighteen days was the consort of Louis XII.[2] An unnamed French poet, who admired her beauty and deplored her fate, begins a poetical biography with a description of the observant and imitative child:

> En ce temps la Boulland qui jeune estoit
> Venue en court, sagement escoutait
> Dames d'honneur, s'efforçant inciter
> Tous ses espritz a bien les imiter;
> Et employa ses sens en tel courage,
> Qu'en peu de temps elle apprint le langage.[3]

After Mary's return to England Anne Boleyn was retained by Claude de France, her successor; by this time her graces had so blossomed that one could scarce have believed she was not 'naïfve Françoyse' but an Englishwoman.

> Elle sçavait bien chanter et danser,
> Et ses propos saigement adjancer,
> Souner du lut et autres instrumentz,
> Pour divertir les tristes pensementz.

Placing-out as a gentlewoman in some lady's household had its educational as well as its social aspect, at any rate while the girls were still quite young. A knowledge of good manners and courtly etiquette, as well as needlework stitches and the mysteries of housewifery, were all to be acquired by this means. So Mabel Fortescue wrote to her guardian Francis Yaxley, when he had placed her with Margaret, Countess of Lennox, to give him 'most

[1] *Hist. MSS. Comm., Hatfield House MSS.*, Part II, 958, p. 381.
[2] Ellis, *Orig. Letters*, vol. i (1825), p. 116.
[3] Crapelet, *Lettres de Henri VIII*, p. 167.

hartie thankes for your paynestaking in my furtheraunce into the sayd service, which I trust shalbe to bring me to the knowledge of such thinges as paradventure I had not seene in my mother's house'.[1] In a large household the girls had companions of their own age; Mabel Fortescue had with her, as fellow-ward, Mary Silles, a cousin of Yaxley's. A daughter of Mr. Thomas Fenton in 1546 was placed out with her godmother, Lady Nevill, wife of Sir Antony Nevill; there were besides three daughters of the house, Elizabeth, Dorothie, and Marie, and three other gentlewomen, Anne Topcliffe, Katerine Topclyffe, and Ursula Clifton.[2]

Younger girls needing oversight and attention were paid for, like Anneys Loveday, who was placed with Lady Paston until a mistress could be provided.[3] Lady Pole also received 26*s.* 8*d.* for boarding in 1458 the troublesome Elizabeth Paston, who failed to find a husband agreeable to her fierce old mother, Agnes Paston. Elizabeth was, however, expected to 'use herself to work readily as other gentlewomen do and somewhat to helpe herself therewith'.[4] Mabel Fortescue received four marks a year in wages and found it 'very scant', so that she was much beholden to her Good Guardian for an occasional present of gloves.

The relation between mistress and gentlewoman naturally varied very much according to temperament. Dorothy Plumpton who was placed in the household of Lady Darcy, her stepmother's mother, was very unhappy and dissatisfied. Not that she complained of her ladyship, who showed her 'loving and tender kyndnesse . . . and if she or ye can fynd athing meyter for me in this parties or any other she will helpe to promote me to the uttermost of her puyssaunce'. But the poor child, like many another school-girl, was homesick and forlorn. She writes

[1] *Cal. Dom. State Papers Eliz.*, vol. xiv, 51.
[2] *Test. Ebor.*, vol. v, p. 250.
[3] Gairdner, *Paston Letters*, vol. i, Letter 157, p. 21.
[4] Ib., Letter 311, p. 422.

to beg her father 'to send for me to come home to you', or

> 'to send a servant of yours to my lady and to me and shew now by your fatherly kyndnesse that I am your child, for I have sent you dyverse messuages and wryttings and I had never answere againe. Wherefore yt is thought in this parties by those persones that list better to say ill than good, that ye have litle favour unto me; the which error ye may now quench yf yt will like you to be so good and kynd father unto me. Also I besech you to send me a fine hatt and some good cloth to make me some kevercheffes. And thus I besech Jesu to have you in his blessed keeping to his pleasure and your harts desire and comforth . . .'[1]

The maidens looked very eagerly to the hand of their ladies in every detail: in the words of one of them, each girl was 'careful to please her mistress, learn what she was taught and keep the knowledge of civility'.[2]

The main occupation of these household scholars was undoubtedly embroidery. 'As for the working of slips', wrote Lady Bridget Vere from her aunt's house to her uncle, Secretary Cecil, 'it is some part of our daily exercise, and the drawing of them. I trust with exercise to frame in some sort to it.'[3] The amount of needlework accomplished in households where there was a retinue of gentlewomen was incredible; a great lady like Katharine, Countess of Northumberland, possessed among her plenishings quantities of embroidered and painted hangings, cushions worked with flowers and pomegranates, bed-covers with birds and beasts.[4]

If marriage took place in early youth, the continuance of a girl's education usually became the duty of her husband's relations. When Sir Henry Sydney's daughter married Lord Cecil's son, he wrote to send her his 'lovyng and father's kys' by a messenger, Johan Tassel, whom he had engaged at Lady Cecil's request to teach the little

1 Plumpton Corresp. Camd. Soc. 1839, p. 202.
2 *Cal. Dom. S. P. Eliz.*, vol. ccxlv, Oct. 1593.
3 *Cal. Dom. S. P. Eliz.*, vol. cclxviii, 74.
4 *Test. Ebor.*, vol. vi, p. 166.

girl French.[1] But many poorer maidens experienced instead of careful training, cruel drudgery, ill-usage, even starvation at the hands of their new relations.

The saddest lot of all, which must be referred to in passing to complete the picture, fell to the children of prisoners, utterly at the world's mercy. The State Papers preserve at least two pathetic references to these poor waifs, at board and school with strangers. The first occurs in a letter of Anne, Lady Hungerford, whose husband had been thrown into the Fleet prison, leaving her destitute; 'I have not heard of my children these twelve months and more,' she wrote in 1570, 'and they are lost for want of good placing. Susan has forgotten to read, and her complexion clean gone with an itch and she has scant to shift upon. Jane is with a sempster in Marlboro, very evil too, and surely I were happy if God would take them out of this life.'[2] Half-a-century later, in 1626, Frances, Lady Braggs, had her little girl with her in the Tower; Secretary Conway offered her release, but the little thing seems to have been too timid to leave her mother. A poor gentlewoman, Mrs. Banfelde, herself fearful of implication in some unrecognized offence, offered to take little Eleanor home and give her the protection of her own name.[3]

The practice of boarding girls out continued all through the seventeenth century, though the development of the boarding-school proper to some degree superseded and drove it out of favour. In one of Ben Jonson's later comedies, The Case is Altered, Aurelia remarks sarcastically:

> I would I had some girls now to bring up;
> O I could make a wench so virtuous
> She should say grace to every bit of meat,
> And gape no wider than a wafer's thickness,
> And she should make French courtesies so most low
> That every touch should turn her over backward.[4]

[1] *Hist. MSS. Comm. MSS. at Hatfield House*, Part I, 1393 (p. 439).
[2] *Cal. Dom. S. P. Eliz.*, vol. xviii, p. 264.
[3] *Cal. Dom. S. P. Charles I*, vol. xxxiv, Nos. 88, 89, 90.
[4] Lamb, *Specimens of the Eng. Dram. Poets* (Bohn, 1897), p. 254.

More characteristic of the Puritan epoch is Mrs. Hutchinson's account of her mother's being placed as a young girl in the family of a French minister who had taken refuge in Jersey from religious persecution; there she studied French and was instructed in the Geneva discipline.[1]

2. *The Nunnery School in its last phase*

Among the openings for girls who required to be 'placed-out' for their advancement in life, board and schooling in the nunnery was, as it had been for centuries past, a favourite expedient.[2] During the years immediately preceding the Dissolution, the much-discussed nunnery school is seen in its latest, in some respects also its most active, phase. The growing poverty of the religious houses obliged many to seek other sources of income than charitable endowment; paying pupils were allowed 'for their relief'. The break-up of feudal households, culminating during the Wars of the Roses, probably left many daughters of noble families without resources, orphaned and homeless; for these the convent, either permanently or until marriage, was an obvious refuge. Towards the middle and end of the fifteenth century educational standards were everywhere advancing, but our information about the convent curriculum is so slight that it is difficult to say whether in any respect it moved with the times.

The nunneries by now were in competition with other home-schools for girls. As regards the number of pupils, unrelated to one another and assembled solely for the purpose of education, some few religious houses were in advance of any corresponding secular establishments. We know of no lay boarding-school in which by 1537 there were twenty-six or possibly thirty pupils, as at Winchester and Polesworth Abbeys. A fair assumption would be that these schools were patronized because they gave their

[1] *Memoirs of Col. Hutchinson* (1892), p. 11.

[2] The evidence has recently been examined in much detail by the author of *Medieval English Nunneries*, who gathers up the opinions of earlier writers on the subject. Some supplementary notes alone will be attempted in this place.

pupils at least as good an upbringing, strictly according to contemporary standards, as those lay-tutors at home and abroad with whom other girls were placed.

For some time prior to the Dissolution the nunneries, once confined to well-bred women, had certainly extended their borders; the daughters of tradesmen and of the yeomanry were not now refused admission. In 1524 Alice Procter, a Bordley yeoman's grandchild, was to be made a nun at Arthington and endowed with some portion of the family acres, while her two brothers were prenticed in London.[1] The Prioress of Wilberfoss, another Yorkshire house, was sister to a wealthy merchant of York, Brian Lord, and received her niece Isabel into her care;[2] another sister, Dame Mabell, was a nun of the same community.

In the same way as the nuns, nunnery pupils varied considerably in their social position. If at Polesworth and St. Mary's Winchester, at Grace Dieu and Godstow, the school-girls' names which remain bear witness to their noble and gentle birth, at a small house like Swaffham Bulbeck many daughters of Cambridge burgesses and tradesmen were 'taking learning'.[3] The Abbey of Barking as well as Sopwell Priory was connected with London citizen-families; one of the Abbesses, Katharine de la Pole, became a citizen and freewoman of London.[4] A phrase occurring in an injunction of the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's to the Priory of St. Helen's Bishopsgate in 1432 almost suggests that day-pupils, who came and went from their homes in the neighbourhood, were permitted. 'We ordeyne', it runs, 'that no seculere personnes come withinne aftyr the belle of complyne except wymmen servaunts and mayde childeryne lerners.'[5]

From no register or other sources can much information be gathered as to how boys and girls placed 'at borde and scole' in a convent occupied their time. Two glimpses

[1] *Test. Ebor.*, vol. v, p. 184. [2] Ib., p. 222 (1526).

[3] Eileen Power, *Medieval English Nunneries*, 1922, p. 268 (1483).

[4] Sharpe, *Calendar of Wills in the Court of Husting*, London, 1258–1688, vol. ii, p. 263 (1387).

[5] Dugdale, *Mon.*, vol. iv, pp. 553–4 (quoted Power, p. 577).

are afforded by contemporary poets, and are suggestive, if possessing no particular value as historic documents:

(1) In Gower's poem *Appolinus of Tyre* the King's daughter Thais is educated by his friend, Strangulio, and his wife:

> She was well taught, she was well boked
> So well she sped hir in hir youth
> That she of every wysedome couth.[1]

When misfortune comes through her foster-mother's jealousy, she asks to be taken to a nunnery, where she may support herself by setting up a girls' school:

> What lorde, that hath his doughter dere,
> And is in will that she shall lere
> Of such a schole that is trewe,
> I shall hir teche of thynges newe
> Whiche that none other woman can
> In all this londe . . .

Pupils flock to her side and she earns a widespread reputation by teaching them the 'wisedome of a clerke' and all things belonging to a gentlewoman's nurture, including music-lessons on citole and harp. The most remarkable subject of study was the art of making proverbs and riddles, a fashionable diversion:

> . . . Whome it liketh for to carpe
> Proverbes and demaundes slie
> Another suche thei never sie
> Whiche that science so well taught.[2]

(2) In his *Boke of Phylyp Sparowe* Skelton describes the acquirements of little Jane Scrope, apparently a pupil at Carrow Abbey. She is engaged upon an elaborate sampler; she can read, write, and spell, and has an extensive knowledge of romantic literature, sacred and profane, the

[1] Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, Bk. VIII (Chambers's *Poets*, vol. ii, p. 260).

[2] Gower, loc. cit., p. 261. Cf. Gascoyne, Chambers's *Poets*, vol. ii, p. 484. 'The Author, knowing that after supper they should pass the time in propounding of Riddles and making of purposes.'

Canterbury Tales, Sir Gawaine and Sir Guy, Judas Maccabeus, and the Homeric heroes.

I am but a yonge mayd,

are the words Skelton puts into her mouth,

And cannot in effect
My stile as yet direct
With Englysh wordes elect . . .
But for my Sparowes sake,
Yet as a woman maye,
My wit I shall assay
An epytaphe to wryghte
In latyne playne and lyght . . .[1]

The two passages correspond with the accepted routine of education for girls—reading and writing, good manners, needlework, and music, even the 'little Latine' to which Fuller referred, which the prototype of medieval learned women, the Lady Margaret, compassed sufficiently to read her primer. Jane Scrope's knowledge of romantic literature cannot indeed be dismissed as wholly impossible; it was from Isabella of Lancaster, a nun of Ambresbury, that Edward III purchased for one hundred marks a book of romance for his own use, which he kept in his chamber.[2]

The question of the nunnery teacher is also of much interest. Did the nuns do all the teaching themselves, and if so, how far were they equipped to instruct others? Girls at school in laymen's houses had visiting teachers; was any such advantage to be obtained in a convent school? Generally speaking, at this period, nuns on admission had to reach a certain standard of attainment. About 1432 Bishop Gray required all the nuns at Elstow to be taught in song and reading and the other things requisite, before admission, or to be capable of instruction within a short time;[3] this would include the memorizing of

[1] Skelton, Chambers's *Poets*, vol. ii, p. 295.

[2] Devon, *Issues of the Exchequer*, p. 144 (1336).

[3] *Visitations of Religious Houses in the Diocese of Lincoln*, ed. A. Hamilton Thompson, vol. i, p. 53 (Canterbury and York Society, 1915).

certain Latin formularies. At Brodholme also, about 1478, nuns before reception had to know how to sing and read.[1] At Thetford in 1514 there was a complaint about the Prioress receiving unlearned nuns.[2]

The taste and skill for fine embroidery persisted in the fifteenth-century convent much as in the outer world. Letitia Wyttenham, Prioress of Sopwell, ranked as a benefactor of St. Alban's Abbey because of her convent's industry in mending and embroidering the sacred vestments.[3] Generally speaking there is no reason whatever to discredit, and much sound evidence for accepting, the tradition which Fuller embodied in a charming phrase: 'Nuns', he said, 'with their needles wrote histories also; that of Christ His Passion for their altar-clothes and other Scripture- and more legend-stories in hangings to adorn their houses.'[4]

As regards the knowledge of Latin it is unsafe to assume after the end of the thirteenth century that it was either obligatory or widespread. Rather throughout the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries it was a diminishing quantity. In this there is nothing surprising. The source of Latin learning for boys was the grammar-school; boys brought up in the monastery were educated on the same familiar lines. Girls nowhere attended grammar-schools; either they entered religion already provided with the ordinary feminine acquirements of their day, or else at such an early age that the convent was responsible for their whole intellectual outfit. A knowledge of the Latin rule, ability to sing the Latin services, these were the crucial points. A smattering of Latin formularies, learnt by rote and tending to become more and more corrupt, can linger on even among classes less well instructed than the average nun. If the nuns were really to understand their Rule and divine petitions, instruction

[1] *Collect. Anglo-Praemonstr.*, vol. ii, Camd. Soc., Series III, vol. x.
[2] *Visitations of Diocese of Norwich*, Camd. Soc., 1888, p. 91.
[3] *V.C.H. Hertford*, vol. iv, p. 424.
[4] Fuller, *Church Hist.*, ed. Brewer, 1845, vol. iii, p. 337.

by some one who knew Latin was essential. The mistress of the novices may have been selected for some superiority in education. A tantalizing hint is the solitary fact that Sister Jane Fisher, a nun of Dartford, 'nobilis et generosa', in 1481, a date when the revival of classic learning was beginning to be reflected in England, received permission from the Vicar of the Master General of the Dominican Order, to 'have a preceptor in grammar and the Latin tongue'. The lessons were to be given in the common locutorium or convent parlour, and the order adds, 'she and other gentlewomen may be called to learn'; whatever exactly these words imply, they show that Sister Jane Fisher was to have fellow-students. There is, however, nothing to indicate whether she was a young novice qualifying for profession, or a nun aspiring to the position of 'eruditrix'.[1]

About 1460 the Prioress of Godstow, for business purposes, and for the information of her servants and rent-gatherers, procured the translation into English of the foundation charters and customals of her house; her convent was for 'the more party in Englyssh bokys well y-lernyd', but it is little surprising that the secret of cramped and abbreviated Latin rolls escaped them.[2] At Minster-in-Sheppey the 'olde evydences' were indeed relegated to a great carved chest kept in the Maydens' Chamber.[3]

As regards the ability of nuns to write, there is little direct evidence, but by the touchstone of contemporary attainments we should expect to find the number steadily increasing as the century drew to a close, especially having regard to the good social position their families as a rule occupied. Letters of abbesses and prioresses are extant over many centuries, and, as the Dissolution approached, letters on educational and personal matters, like those of Margaret Vernon, Prioress of Little Marlow, and Abbess Elizabeth Shelley of Winchester, or letters pleading for

[1] *Archaeolog. Journ.*, vol. xxxix (1882), p. 178. 'Jane Fitzh'er' in the original.
[2] *English Register of Godstow Nunnery*, E.E.T.S., O.S. 142, p. 25 et seq.
[3] Walcott, *Inventory of the Priory of Minster-in-Sheppey*, p. 30.

houses condemned to destruction are abundant, and are no less fluent and expressive than the correspondence of Margaret Paston and her circle, Alice, Countess of Suffolk, or Honor, Lady Lisle's female acquaintance. The old prejudice against women being taught to write had not been regarded as equally applicable to the nun, and was now rapidly disappearing.

The knowledge of Anglo-French lingered on in some of the convents in a remarkable way. In 1387, when English was fast becoming the language of daily use, Bishop Bokyngham enjoined the Elstow nuns to speak French among themselves.[1] A century and a half later, at the Dissolution, John Ap Rice, one of Cromwell's visitors of religious houses, found the nuns of Lacock Abbey had 'their rule, the institutes of their religion and ceremonies of the same written in the French tongue, which they understood well and are very perfitt in the same. Albeit that it varieth from the vulgar Frenche that is now used and is moche like the Frenche that the Common Lawe is written in.'[2]

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries episcopal injunctions to nuns were written in English, but such official documents were likely to follow a prevalent custom and have no very important bearing on the question of the nuns' attainments. A gradual disuse of colloquial Anglo-French, from the mid-fourteenth century, characterized the classes to which the nuns belonged; on the other hand, young gentlewomen and merchants' daughters continued to learn French of Paris, as an accomplishment, and grammars were written for their use. The number of nuns entering convents in adult life who knew something of French was no doubt proportionate to the number of girls possessing such knowledge in any other selected group; nunnery attainments reflected those of the surrounding society, just as their dress was apt to be unduly

[1] *V.C.H. Beds.*, vol. i, p. 355, note 6.
[2] Ellis, *Original Letters*, Series III, 1846, vol. i, Preface xii, note.

influenced by secular fashions, the wearing of 'Cornered Crests', to show the forehead, 'crested shoys', or crimson stomachers.[1] Secular girls read and rejoiced in the French Romance; nuns, at least in some convents, read selected books in French. The Countess of Oxford in 1477 presented to Barking Nunnery a French MS. containing very suitable reading, the Lamentations of St. Bernard, the Meditations of St. Augustine, and the Life of St. Louis.[2] The Convent of Marrick received, a few years earlier, a copy of de Guilevile's Pèlerinage de l'Âme;[3] the Abbess of Denny had a French book from Agnes, Lady Stapilton.[4]

Children very early set apart for the religious life cannot upon their entrance have been able to reach the educational standards expected of those professed at a later age. They were accordingly provided with a schoolmistress selected from among the nuns. The nuns of St. Helens were enjoined to chose one of their number, honest, able, and cunning of discretion, to have charge of the teaching and information of 'unkunnyng' sisters, and teach them a nun's first obligation, their service and rule.[5] The author of the *Abbey of the Holy Ghost* describes in an allegory the teaching of the young novices who learned manners on the same lines as their sisters in the world:

> 'Honeste es maystresse of the novyce[s] and teches tham alle curtasye, how they sall speke and gange and sytt and stande and how they sall bere tham with-owtten and within; howe to God, howe to man, so that alle that tham sese of tham may take ensampell of alle gudnes and alle gud thewes.'[6]

Obviously the instructress of the nuns would usually herself be a nun. The question still remains unanswered

[1] *Archaeologia*, vol. xlvii, p. 53.
[2] Wood, *Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies*, vol. i, p. 94.
[3] *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *Sixth Report*, p. 288.
[4] *North Country Wills*, Surtees Society, vol. 116, p. 48 (1448).
[5] Kentwode's *Constitutions for Nuns of St. Helen's*, quoted in Hugo, *Medieval Nunneries of the County of Somerset*, 1867, p. xlix (1439).
[6] *Abbey of the Holy Ghost*, E.E.T.S., O.S. 26, p. 54 (*c.* 1440).

whether the nuns were also the sole teachers of the girl-pupils; they could certainly have compassed the lessons in piety and nurture, reading and embroidery, even writing and French, and these were the chief requisites. Boys were undoubtedly allowed lay instructors. When Gregory, the son of Thomas Cromwell, was sent, as a small boy, to be educated under Margaret Vernon, Prioress of Little Marlow, she duly reported on his progress: 'Your son is in good health, and is a very good scholar, and can construe his Pater Noster, Ave and Creed.' Another letter explains how Gregory shares his studies with a schoolfellow, Nicholas Saddeler; Mr. Copland the tutor every morning gives the two boys a Latin lesson, 'which Nicholas doth bear away as well Gregory's lesson as his own and maketh him perfect against his time of rendering, at which their master is greatly comforted'. After a time Mr. Copland left and the Prioress took pains to provide a successor. A friend at Oxford recommended a Master of Arts and Fellow of Lincoln College, William Inglefield, who agreed to purchase a schoolmaster's licence and teach Gregory, at all events for a year. Prioress Margaret was anxious that her authority over the boy till he reached the age of twelve should be fully recognized: 'if he should have such a master which would disdain if I meddled, then it would be to me great unquietness, for I assure you, if you sent hither a doctor of divinity yet will I play the smatterer . . .'[1] Master Saddeler, Gregory Cromwell's companion, had, however, with him 'a little gentlewoman', probably a sister or kinswoman, whom Prioress Margaret hoped for permission to educate herself.

At an earlier date in some convents individual nuns

[1] Wood, *Letters*, loc. cit., vol. ii, pp. 58 and 60. Cf. Gairdner, *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, vol. v, p. 15, and Brewer, vol. iv, Part III, 5970.

These letters are undated. They can, however, from internal evidence relating to the vacant priory of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, be placed between November 1528 and August 1529. Little Marlow Priory was dissolved in June 1536, and soon after M. Vernon succeeded to the Abbacy of Malling. The order of events adopted is that which appears most natural.

took private pupils, both boys and girls, sometimes specially assigned to them by the Abbess.[1] In 1358 the Godstow nuns were limited by Bishop Gynewell to one or two girl-pupils each; at Fairwell one child apiece, if a boy not to be over seven years old, was licensed by authority.[2] At Elstow in 1442–3 certain nuns had their little boy-pupils, who were noisy and disturbing, in the quire with them.[3] The danger of encouraging a desire for personal gain by this system was guarded against by the provision that the profit of the fees should accrue to the common funds.[4] Such an arrangement cannot have conduced to a high standard of educational efficiency, and there seems to be no evidence of its existence in those nunneries where before the Dissolution schools of some size had come into being. These had recognized schoolmistresses; at Dr. Hede's Visitation of Nunnaminster in 1501 Agnes Cox was Senior Teacher (dogmatista); the novices had a separate mistress, Margaret Legh. Alice Whytingstale was Mistress of the School at Romsey in 1502.[5]

One example is specially interesting because it raises the question whether nunnery schoolmistresses were usually licensed by their Order to teach, as were schoolmasters by the Bishop. In 1527 a concession previously granted to Sister Elizabeth Cresner, Prioress of Dartford Nunnery, was reaffirmed by Brother Anthony of Ferrara, Vicar for Garcias de Loyssa, the Master-General. She was permitted to receive young ladies and to give them a suitable training 'according to the mode heretofore pursued'.[6] At this time Prioress Elizabeth had already held office for thirty-nine years, having been appointed some seven years after a former educational concession to her house (the Latin lessons already discussed), when she was probably a nun.

[1] William of Wykeham's injunction uses the word 'discipulas', which may, however, refer to novices.

[2] Power, p. 578.

[3] *Visit. Linc.*, loc. cit., vol. ii, p. 90.

[4] At St. Helen's Bishopsgate. Dugdale, *Mon.*, vol. iv, pp. 553–4.

[5] *V.C.H. Hants*, vol. ii, p. 124.

[6] *Archaeol. Journal*, vol. xxxix (1882), p. 177.

The interest of her community in education was bound up with its original foundation.[1]

Apart from quite elementary teaching, instruction in special subjects, such as music, by visiting teachers, was becoming usual for secular girls; this method was evidently not forbidden to the nuns themselves. There is no evidence that it was generally available for convent-bred girls, yet the question arises of a standard of good upbringing; by the Dissolution this standard was becoming clearly defined. While Bridget Plantagenet was being educated with other well-born girls at St. Mary's Abbey, her half-sisters, Anne and Mary Basset, were learning conversational French, music, reading, and writing, from masters engaged for them in France. Lady Lisle thought these things of importance and was ambitious for all her daughters. The chief concern of the French 'tutresses', Madame de Riou and Madame de Bours, was suitable dress and deportment, and the Abbess Elizabeth also, in her letters, makes no reference to education, beyond the purchase of a matins-book, but dwells upon the need of 'convenient apparel' for her young charge. It is, however, difficult to believe that Bridget's parents would have expected no more from a fashionable school than ability to read the primer. When the little girl was permitted to 'sport her for a week' with her father's kindly steward, Sir Anthony Wynsor, he found her 'very spare and in need of cherishing', and accordingly kept her with him for good, without consulting the Abbess; but he took pains to assure Lady Lisle that in her altered surroundings she should 'lack nothing in learning'.[2]

There is no direct evidence about the teaching of music to schoolgirls, but schoolboys in monastic houses certainly had visiting music-masters. At Glastonbury in

[1] Cf. *Archaeol. Journal*, vol. xxxvi (1879), p. 241. The sisters of the Dominican Order were founded by St. Dominic in 1206, with the idea of their educating in religion 'girls of noble but reduced families in Southern France'. They entered England in 1345 and were known as 'The Order of Sisters Preachers'.

[2] Wood, *Letters*, vol. ii, p. 217.

1534 James Renynger—no religious but a singing-man, liable to be summoned to the king's service—was engaged by Abbot Whiting and the convent to teach 'six children in pricke song and discaunts and two of them to play on the organs'.[1] The convent were to find 'clavyncordes' for the children's use. At Christmas and other times when required, Renynger was to sing and play instruments of music. In Gower's nunnery school of romance the pupils learnt 'citole and lute', from a mistress who was not professed. The six-and-twenty girls at Nunnaminster may have waited for music lessons till they left school, but sooner or later, if they were not to be wholly outclassed by their friends, they no doubt followed the prevailing fashion.

[1] Gairdner, *Letters and Papers*, vol. vii, 1056.

VIII

THE RENAISSANCE AND THE EDUCATION OF ENGLISH WOMEN

1. *Introductory*

THE name of Renaissance, is universally accepted for that movement of the human consciousness which first illumined European history in the fifteenth century. Yet, speaking generally, the process was not so much a bringing to birth of new ideas as a re-adjustment of contemporary thought. This had become in many directions formalized, obscured, restricted; it needed to be accommodated afresh to those other conceptions of life, wider liberty, a flawless harmony, clearer and more direct vision, to which the great literature of the past, now as it were rediscovered, had attempted to give expression.

Yet in one department of the social order, the intellectual status of women, as we observe closely the impact of the Renaissance upon its formlessness, the word rebirth seems to be the only appropriate description. The clouding of the rich possibilities of human life as it has been said largely resulted from the intensity of the struggle waged during the earlier Christian ages to establish in human society, beyond all challenge, the paramount claims of duty, of conscience which is the Voice of God. The conditions of women's lives, their greater seclusion and restricted range of interests brought upon them the full weight of that sombre discipline. They were regarded as particularly frail vessels, requiring constant safeguards, especially in youth, against temptation within and without. Their predisposition to piety, if not to spirituality, was fully exercised, while the claims of the intellect were scarcely recognized as having for them any existence. Even in the golden days to which the thoughts of scholars now reverted,the opportunities for self-expression afforded

to women had never equalled those which men enjoyed, or approached those which were now very gradually to be unfolded. The presence of this colourless background makes the study of renaissance influences upon certain groups of women full of interest and suggestion.

From Plato's ideas upon education and the place he assigns to women in the Ideal Republic, and to a lesser degree from the opinions of Seneca and other writers, taken in conjunction with the Christian doctrine that 'in Christ Jesus is neither male nor female', the Humanists drew a fresh inspiration. They held the Platonic view that wisdom and virtue, which is wisdom expressed in conduct, can be acquired; that exalted character can be created by the process of education: consequently the absence of learning in a woman is in itself a root of evil. The acquisition of true knowledge has a fortifying effect upon the female character. Vives sums up the position in a striking passage,

> ' This [want of education] is the only cause why all women for the most part are hard to please, studious and most diligent to adorn themselves, marvellers of trifles, in prosperity proud and insolent, in adversity abject and feeble; and for lack of good learning, they love and hate that only the which they learned of their unlearned mothers.'[1]

By the measure of personality, the contrast in development between leading women of the Renaissance like Vittoria Colonna, Isabella la Cattolica, or Margaret Roper, and the typical lady of the chivalric ages, is as marked as the contrast of childhood and maturity; it seems indeed to call for some further explanation beyond a mere difference in book-learning. There is not only wider knowledge, there are also firmer and nobler outlines of character, powers of initiative and self-reliance, a greater sense of personal dignity. The fact of being treated as a rational being, liberated from a constant irritating surveillance; the fact of becoming an object of interest and high

[1] Foster Watson, *Vives*, p. 200.

expectation, a desired companion, instead of an object of anxiety and repression, must have counted for very much in the experience of a sensitive girl. To it she responded with wonder and delight, but with an excessive anxiety to meet the new demands, an anxiety sometimes painful to observe. Then, too, intellectual interests were a new factor in home life. Hitherto learning had been mainly the prerogative of men who were cut off by their profession from family ties. Now, owing to the invention of printing, laymen were able to enjoy, and to share with their kinswomen, the great thoughts of past generations. The change came by degrees. The household of Sir Thomas More excited admiration because it was exceptional. In many homes the cleavage of thought between the generations was, for the time being, unusually wide; the parental outlook clashed sharply with the daughter's new vision. This was the 'truth' which the Lady Jane Grey confided to Ascham:

'When I am in presence either of father or mother, whether I speak, keep silence, sit, stand or go, eat, drink, be merry or sad, be sewing, playing, dancing or doing anything else, I must do it as it were . . . even so perfectly as God made the world, or else I am so sharply taunted, so cruelly threatened, yea, presently sometimes with pinches, nips and bobs and other ways which I will not name for the honour I bear them, so without measure misordered, that I think myself in hell till time come that I must go to Mr. Aylmer, who teacheth me so gently, so pleasantly, with such fair allurements to learning, that I think all the time nothing whilst I am with him.'[1]

2. *The Debt of the Renaissance to Classic Literature on the Subject of Women's Learning*

TheHumanists, in advocating theinstruction of women, constantly, in Vives' words 'call the old world to remembrance and rehearse their time'. The inferences they draw from classic writers are interesting and characteristic. Their predecessors of the Middle Ages, in various

[1] *Works of Roger Ascham* (1761), p. 222 (spelling modernized).

legends of good women, had made use of illustrations and of warning instances so often rehearsed that they came at last to be regarded as embodiments of particular virtues or vices. The later writers did not discard these old favourites but, from a more extensive repertory, deduced other examples and employed them not only for moral reasons but on the combined claims of well-doing and of erudition.

A present-day critic anxious, for instance, to be enlightened on the subject of girls' instruction in the Roman Empire, in so far as it concerned the remote province of Britain, finds the whole subject wrapped in obscurity. He has no safe grounds even for asserting that in Britain, as in Rome, the girls in their earliest years attended the same elementary school as the boys and learnt to write and read and count; nor that like Roman maidens they read Menander's comedies, or pursued Greek studies with the blue-stockings of Lucretius' time.[1]

Vives and his contemporaries, on the other hand, conjured up from a past more or less remote, and not infrequently from a mythic antiquity, idealized figures which took shape out of a few suggestive phrases of some Greek or Latin poet or historian. The ten Sibyls and the five daughters of Diodorus, Phemonoe of Delphi, 'founder of heroic song', Corinna of Tanagra, Hortensia, the spokeswoman of her fellow-citizens, Edesia of Alexandria, Diotima, Aspasia, and many another half symbolic figure were, in things of the mind, the progenitors of Margaret More, of Lady Jane Grey, and of the queenly lovers of ancient thought.

'Perdy,' wrote Sir Thomas Elyot in his *Defence of Good Women*, 'many arts and necessary occupations have been invented by women, as I will bring now to your remembrance. Latin letters were first founded by Nicostrata, called also Carmentis. The seven Liberal Arts and poetry by the Nine Maidens called the

[1] Cf. *Die Römischen Privatalterthümer*, von Hugo Blümner, Dritter Abschnitt, p. 341.

VI. BOETHIUS WITH PHILOSOPHY AND THE SEVEN LIBERAL ARTS

French School fifteenth century, Wallace Collection

'Perdy, many arts and necessary occupations have been invented by women as I will now bring to your remembrance. The seven Liberal Arts and Poetry by the Nine Maidens called the Muses', p. 144

Muses. Why was Minerva honoured for a goddess but because she first found in Grecia planting or setting of trees. . . . Cleobulina the daughter of Cleobulus, one of the seven wise men of Greece, wrote diffuse and mystical questions in heroical verses. . . . If the learning and wisdom of the lady Cassandra, daughter to King Priam, had been regarded more than the counsel of flatterers, the city of Troy had longer remained. . . .'[1]

Vives' list of stirring examples which opens with Sarah and Rebecca includes Penelope and Andromache as well as Lucretia, Hipparchia, Portia, Cato's wife, and many of the women-saints.[2]

Passing from legend to history, the Humanists were on securer ground in commending the simplicity which had characterized the upbringing of girls in the early Roman republic, at that period when the natural functions of womanhood were accepted as the basis of youthful training and invested with a grave dignity: when handicraft, to be distinguished from inferior menial duties such as cooking or grinding corn, was of the first importance; when the matron, devoted, pure, austere, sat in her hall spinning and weaving and her daughters and maidens learnt of her to be skilful wool-workers, shaping the garments needed by the family; when they learnt also, by precept and example, traditional rules of conduct, the usage of their ancestors, habits of virtue and industry.[3]

Just as about the middle of the third century B.C. Greek thought profoundly affected Roman ideas of womanhood, and the Roman lady, although not less virtuous and respected, became more accomplished and attractive, and acquired a better marriage status;[4] so in the sixteenth century A.D., Plato's ideas coloured the outlook of scholars and were brought to bear upon the position of their wives and daughters.[5]

1 Elyot, *Defence of Good Women.* Quoted in *Vives and the Renascence Education of Women*, Foster Watson, p. 231.

2 Ib., p. 208.

3 Cf. ib., p. 44.

4 Cf. Dill, *Roman Society in the last Century of the Western Empire*, p. 163

5 Cf. *Republic*, Book V.

In the portrait gallery of ideal women Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi (*c.* 180 B.C.), whom Tacitus lauded as the type of matronly virtue,[1] had a foremost place. The exemplary upbringing of her sons was no less admired than her love of letters, her conversance with Greek literature, the Epistles—models of composition—which she wrote in her own language, and her patronage of poets and philosophers.

Our authors noted also classic references to women writers; to the Memoirs of Agrippina which were among the authorities of Tacitus; to the love-poems of Sulpicia, addressed to her husband Calenus, which had drawn from Martial an epigram on conjugal affection and were admired by Ausonius and Sidonius Apollinaris;[2] they observed with care that Argentaria Polla, Lucan's wife, in the words of Vives, 'after her husband's death corrected his books and it is said helped him with the making'.[3] The authority of Martial, who regarded learning as a charm in a girl-wife,[4] of the Younger Pliny, and above all of Seneca were found unquestionably to support the contention that both sexes possessed equal capacity for study and learning. The words of Seneca, writing to console his mother Helvia for his exile, sounded a keynote which re-echoed through humanistic literature: in her anxiety had he not pointed her to the comfort and strength to be found in books and regretted only that her father, a man of old-fashioned notions, had not given her in girlhood a more thorough education.[5] Pliny's pleasure in the literary tastes which his young wife Calpurnia[6] had developed was of living interest for scholars filled with an

[1] Tacitus, *Dial. de Orat.*, c. 28.

[2] Dill, *Roman Society . . . Aurelius*, p. 80, from *Ann.* iv. 53.

[3] Foster Watson, p. 51.

[4] Martial, Lib. xii. 98, l. 3, 'Dives, nobilis, erudita, casta.'

[5] Seneca, *Ad Helviam Matrem de Consol*, cap. xvi. His words are: 'Quantum tibi patris mei antiquus rigor permisit omnes bonas artes non quidem comprehendisti, attigisti tamen'; and again, 'in antiqua et severa institutam domo'.

[6] He adds (Plin. *Epist.* Lib. iv. 19, ed. 1741): 'Meos libellos habet, lectitat, ediscit etiam,' but the passage does not make fully clear whether he is referring to books or to his own pleadings.

affectionate and fatherly pride in the acquirements of their book-learned and book-loving daughters: in both cases there was the sense of enlightened encouragement awakening a grateful, a delighted response. Calpurnia's gift for instrument and song[1] made yet another link with a music-loving age. On the vexed subject of dancing Vives preferred Roman opinion to the Greek—'we read not that any of those matrons used dancing'—and quoted approvingly Sallust's remark that Sempronia sang and danced more 'cunningly' than was necessary for a virtuous woman.[2]

Girlhood at the Renaissance thus owed a great debt to the education of Greek and Roman women at certain periods of brilliancy; even to the intellectual pursuits of goddess and nymph; as these things appeared through the medium of a fervent and romantic idealism.

3. *Italy*

From a survey of English educational history some reference, however cursory, to the conditions in other European countries, and especially Italy and Spain, cannot be omitted.

In Italy, it has been said, the true forerunner of Renaissance thought was Francis of Assisi; he first awoke in the popular imagination a sense of the untrammelled liberty and joy which belong to the divine intention for human life; he first made laughter free of the courts of heaven. From this point of view, his attitude towards women, his knight-errantry on behalf of Chiara and her sister, his consecration of a new type of spiritual companionship between men and women, fellow-workers within the order of Holy Poverty, deserve at least passing notice; they are the first hint of some new trend of thought.

[1] Pliny says: 'She sets my verses to music and sings them to the harp with on professional to teach her but love alone.' An inscription at Rome to Claudia, wife of Cornelius Neritus, gives her the title of 'Citharoeda', one who plays on the zither, singing while she plays. Orelli, *Inscrip.*, vol. i, p. 457, 2611.

[2] Foster Watson, *Vives*, p. 102.

To appreciate the changed outlook of the Renaissance it is well also to glance backward at the traditional upbringing of Italian women. The basis had always been religious instruction, of a somewhat formal description; not necessarily a cultivation of heart and soul, but strict observance of the forms of religion. The ideals were twofold: the ideal of the Roman matron, and that of the cloistered nun. The latter had for long gained the upper hand; but on the eve of the Renaissance there came a tendency to belaud the noble austerity and enlightened domesticity of the Roman type. A good picture of a girl's training at the close of the Middle Ages occurs in the Florentine Vespasiano de Bisticci's life of Alessandra dei Bardi, born about 1414.[1] At the very time that this young girl was growing up among the waning influences of the past, her father-in-law, Palla Strozzi, was sending scholars, at his own charges, to Constantinople, to bring back the Greek books which were to revolutionize European thought.[2] The mother of Alessandra, a woman of some insight, was eager to educate her daughter after the best opinions, ancient and modern. Accordingly, she took as models the Christian lady Paula, exercising her child in piety, and the Emperors Octavian and Charlemagne, training her in domestic economy and handicraft, as the Emperors had trained their own daughters. Lastly, she copied the Roman lady Caia Cecilia who, in her day, spun wool and had it woven into garments, 'a labour honourable to the Republic of Rome'.

Alessandra learnt to read pious books and to recite pious formulas; she was rarely to be seen out of doors or at the window; her mother took her to hear Mass with her head closely veiled and, when she grew a little older, on feast days, to visit the nuns at some neighbouring convent, for the example of their virtuous lives.

The Florentine dwells at length on this model upbringing; already, as he wrote, times had altered; young

[1] Mai, *Spicil. Rom.*, t. ix, p. 595: Vita della Alessandra dei Bardi.
[2] Ib., p. 600.

VII. SAINT ANNE AND THE VIRGIN

From a painting by Murillo in the Prado Gallery at Madrid

'In Spain . . . the gates were opened to the onrush of the new learning by the hand of a woman', p. 151

girls went freely into society and were permitted to read the Cento Novelle, and the Sonnets of Petrarch. Parents no longer consecrated their little daughters to the cloister but dedicated them to the Muses. If the old system had but partially unfolded the powers of the mind, the new led in many cases to a startling precocity. Trivulzia of Milan was but fourteen when, after an intensive education in classic lore, she attracted public attention by her gifts of oratory.[1]

Each separate state of Italy gloried in the scholars and poets numbered among its citizens; each strove to surpass the rest in the patronage of learning. At Padua, and Ferrara, at Mantua and Verona, at the courts of Naples and Sicily, in Venice and Florence, the names of illustrious women have a place on the roll of fame. The historians treat them as a class apart, the outcome of a brilliant epoch; the poets sing their fame, and delineate, in heroines lovely, passionate, intrepid, the noblewomen of the Italian courts. Ariosto immortalizes the name of Isabella Gonzaga and that of her sister Beatrice Sforza :

> Quella
> D'opere illustri e di bei studi amica
> Ch'io non so ben se più leggiadra e bella
> Mi debba dire, o più saggia e pudica.[2]

Isabella d'Este, the wife of Francesco Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, was indeed the typical scholar-princess of the Renaissance; an accomplished Latinist, singer and lute-player, the patroness of artists like Mantegna and Titian or of poets like Boiardo, the lover of costly Aldines and manuscripts beyond price, from her girlhood in the court of Ferrara to the days when she beguiled old age and sickness with the histories of Arthur and his knights or of Godefroi de Bouillon, she remained an exquisite figure of romantic beauty and charm.

Women like Costanza Varano, wife of Alessandro Sforza of Pessaro, or Isotta Nogarola of Verona, took part in

[1] Gregorovius, *Lucretia Borgia*, 1874, trans. Garner, 1904, p. 28.
[2] Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, Canto xiii. 59.

public debates on points of philosophy and theology in the halls of the Universities. Vicenza refused to allow the accomplished Cassandra Fedele to depart the city when pope and kings, Leo X, Louis XII, and Isabella of Castile, invited her presence to grace their courts.[1] If these women were exceptionally gifted, the studies they pursued with such ardour formed part of the accepted curriculum for the daughters of noble houses.

Religious teaching continued to be the basis of education; a few years' training in a convent was still usual, and social intercourse for young girls was far less free than in England and the Netherlands:[2] but the new range of accomplishments, the courses in literature and philology, the culture of the ancients, all these were open alike to men and women; both alike prepared themselves to take their place in a society largely occupied in discussing classical subjects. Girls did not acquire their humanistic knowledge in the convent; tutors, often poets or scholars, were engaged to instruct both the sons and daughters of the house. The master of Cecilia Gonzaga, daughter of Ludovico, Marquis of Mantua, was the great teacher Vittorino da Feltre:[3] the novelist Bandello instructed Lucretia Gonzaga.[4] The tutors of Isabella d'Este were Battista Guarino and Jacopo Gallino, with whom she construed the Aeneid and learned by heart Virgil's Eclogues and the Letters of Cicero.[5] Occasionally a woman teacher is named, like Madonna Marietta, in the household of Messer Palla di Nofri degli Strozzi,[6] or Violante de' Preti, the governess of Elisabetta and Maddalena Gonzaga.[7] Lucretia Borgia was educated under the direction of Adriana Ursina in the Orsini Palace at Rome, in Spanish and French, Greek and Latin, in music and drawing, and

1 Yriarte, *La Vie d'un Patricien de Venise*, p. 45.

2 Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S. G. C. Middlemore, 1890, p. 399, note 2.

3 W. H. Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre* (1897), pp. 29, 50.

4 *Biog. Dict.*, art. Bandello.

5 Cartwright, *Isabella d'Este*, vol. i, p. 9.

6 Mai, *Spicil. Rom.*, t. ix, p. 600.

7 Cartwright, *Isabella d'Este*, vol. i, p. 38.

the art of embroidering silk and gold;[1] while Roman poets taught her to write sonnets and appreciate Italian versification.[2]

The old ideal of *noblesse oblige* in matters of the intellect was everywhere accepted. The daughters of princely houses perfected themselves in writing and speaking Latin, and were regarded as miracles of learning in the foreign courts to which they went as brides. When Beatrice of Naples, the young Queen of Hungary, visited Vienna in 1483 she gratified the orators, who received her with Latin dissertations, by listening attentively and smiling appreciatively when their remarks pleased her.[3] The letter of Antonio Galateo, the Court Physician, written about 1502 to Bona the granddaughter of Alphonso II, King of Naples, the future bride of Sigismund of Poland, strikingly illustrates the high standards set before a youthful noblewoman. Her rank sets her apart from, above, other girls; she is born to rule, they to serve. This innate difference must be reflected in her occupations; while girls of her own age play with hoops, or at throwing dice, or if it is not a holiday, employ themselves in working wool, flax, or silk, she must pass her time with Virgil and Cicero, and study the Old and New Testament and the Christian fathers. The basis of true kingship is pre-eminence in virtue—she must earn the title not of an ordinary girl but of a heroine, remembering that without letters no one can live rightly.[4]

4. *Spain*

The influences of the Italian Renaissance in relation to women's education reached England most directly by way of Spain. In Spain, no less than in England and Italy, the period was marked by a flowering of personality; and the gates were opened to the onrush of the new learning by the hand of a woman. Isabella of Castile had been

[1] Gregorovius, loc. cit., p. 31. [2] Ib., p. 33.
[3] Aschbach, *Die Wiener Universität und ihre Humanisten*, vol. ii, p. 10.
[4] Mai, *Spicil. Rom.*, t. viii, p. 532.

carefully educated on old-fashioned lines in the seclusion of a country town. She had learnt the usual lessons of piety and had studied several modern languages, but, like the Lady Margaret, she knew no Latin and, like her, regretted her ignorance. After her accession, on the cessation of war with Portugal, and in the scanty leisure of a queen, she set to work to remedy her defective education, and it was not long before her Confessor could address her indifferently in Latin and Castilian;[1] her instructress was a woman, Doña Beatriz de Galindo, known as La Latina.[2] From her father, John II, Isabella inherited a taste for collecting books and manuscripts, which she bestowed where they would be serviceable to education. In the Escorial are still preserved two collections made for her personal use, their gorgeous bindings well worn.[3] Not content with cultivating her own mind, like Charlemagne of old she observed the idle, unprofitable lives of the young noblemen and women about the court. By the good offices of Count Tendilla, her ambassador at Rome, she induced the Italian scholar, Peter Martyr, to come to Spain and set up a court school;[4] and his teaching aroused as deep a passion for letters as his students had once felt for frivolous pursuits. The exact position of the girl-scholars in Isabella's scheme cannot be ascertained, but definite provision was made for them. The great scholar Antonio de Lebrija (Antonio Nebrissensis), professor of Latin at Seville and afterwards at Salamanca and Alcalá, published in 1492 his *Grammatica Castillana* for the better instruction of ladies of the court in their mother-tongue.[5] Spanish ladies of high rank were the friends of scholars and patronesses of literature. Nor was La Latina the only woman teacher of repute: Doña Lucia de Medrano gave public lectures on Latin classics in the University of Salamanca: Doña Francisca, the daughter

[1] Prescott, *Ferdinand and Isabella*, (1846), vol. ii, ch. xix, p. 168.
[2] Ib., p. 179.
[3] Ib., p. 170.
[4] Ib., pp. 174–5.
[5] Ib., p. 181.

VIII. SAINT ANNE AND THE VIRGIN

From a painting by Pinturicchio in the Church of S. Onofrio at Rome

'From the thirteenth century onwards the Education of the Virgin became not seldom a theme for artistic treatment . . . the subject was one commended by the Church to women of many lands', p. 11

of the scholarly Lebrija, filled the Chair of Rhetoric at Alcalá, the Athens of Spain. In no other country save Italy did women hold learned appointments of such prominence; one must indeed revert to Moorish Spain of the tenth century to find their parallel.

Printing was introduced into Spain at the beginning of the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella. 'The Queen', says Prescott, 'saw from the first moment all the advantages which it promised for diffusing and perpetuating the discoveries of science.'[1] The first Spanish printing-press was probably erected at Valencia in 1474;[2] the first printed book was one which symbolized the union of the old and new systems of women's education, a collection of songs in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

A woman so deeply impressed with the value of learning as Isabella the Catholic was likely to spare no pains in the education of her own children. She herself instructed her four daughters, and in the old-new fashion to prevail for a century to come, engaged as their tutors learned foreigners, especially the brothers Antonio and Alessandro Geraldino from Italy. Alessandro, afterwards Bishop of St. Domingo, remained in the royal service for twenty-two years; in his old age he in some way incurred the displeasure of his former pupil Catharine of Aragon, now Queen of England, and as he had fallen into poverty Pope Leo X mediated on his behalf with Henry VIII and Catharine herself, applying to the occasion the appropriate quotation, 'Senex puellam instruebat, puella autem senem regebat'.[3]

Catharine's education began at the age of four. During her early childhood she spent much time with her mother in camp while the royal armies were engaged in besieging Granada. She was still but a child when, after a series of Latin love-letters, she was betrothed in 1494 to Prince Arthur, the eldest son of Henry VII of England. In July

[1] Ib., p. 187. [2] Ib., p. 189.
[3] Brewer, *Henry VIII*, vol. ii, Part II, Nos. 3774–5, 4195–6.

1498 the Princess Margaret visited the court of Spain, and De Puebla, the Spanish Ambassador in England, wrote on behalf of her mother, Elizabeth of York and the Lady Margaret, her grandmother, to request that the future 'Princess of Wales' should always speak French with her guest, 'in order to learn the language and to be able to converse in it when she comes to England'. 'This', added the ambassador, 'is necessary, because these ladies do not understand Latin, much less Spanish.'[1]

5. *England*

The ideas of the Renaissance very gradually took root in England; they flourished most abundantly at that stage of the movement, when the worship of classic form, the predominating interest in the Latin stylists, was giving place to the profounder study of Greek. It is not John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, or even Duke Humphrey of Gloucester who are typical of the Renaissance spirit in this country, but such men as Prior Selling of Canterbury, Grocyn, and Linacre, above all Dean Colet and Sir Thomas More. In them the highest claims of the intellect were subservient to the new spirit in religion; their most absorbing studies were studies of the sacred writings; they aimed at transmuting outworn formalism into something vital, glowing, sincere, something most spiritual when most appealing to the humanity in man.

This group had a close acquaintance with the character of the movement in Italy; some of them had studied in her schools, all were in friendly relation with her leading scholars. Their service to England consisted in engrafting with patient skill the new learning upon the old stock of the Universities, to which Englishmen looked confidently and without suspicion for intellectual guidance.[2] Their service to Englishwomen was of the same character, yet of necessity even more directly a personal service. Through

[1] C. H. Cooper, *Life of the Lady Margaret*, p. 231 (note to p. 5, l. 11).

[2] Cf. Creighton, *Historical Lectures and Addresses*, 'The Early Renaissance in England', p. 204 et seq.

the medium of their instruction the treasures of thought were laid open to a chosen few, their own kinswomen and acquaintance.

It is not possible to identify any one woman of Italy whose career can be said to have suggested to Sir Thomas More his views on girls' education, in the same way as the life and writings of Pico della Mirandola aroused his youthful enthusiasm.[1] Such liberal ideas were in the air, a part of the Platonic heritage, and were likely to attract a man of More's social insight and generous temperament. The tardy arrival of the Renaissance in England meant, however, that the most prominent women in the movement were not now the brilliant half-pagan figures for whom one can scarcely point to any English counterpart, but those graver and nobler personalities, Cecilia Gonzaga, Vittoria Colonna,the friend of Michelangelo, Julia Bigolina of Padua,[2] the learned nun, Laurentia Strozzi,[3] and that Olympia Fulvia Morata who is at so many points a kinswoman in spirit of the Lady Jane Grey.[4]

If the influence of Italy was embodied in no one particular woman the same need not be said about the influence of Spain. Catharine of Aragon proceeded to England in 1501; eight years later, on the death of Prince Arthur, she was married to Henry VIII. Erasmus, no friend of the life of courts, testifies to the universal esteem in which the Court of England was held during the early years of the new reign, under the rule of a king 'singularly endowed with all princely excellencies and a queen most like unto him'; he testifies also to the high qualities, the sincerity, learning, gravity, and wisdom—of those they gathered around them,[5] among whom of outstanding importance for our present study were the Spaniard, Vives, and the brilliant young lawyer, Sir Thomas More.

1 Stapleton, *Tres. Thomae*, p. 41.

2 B. Scardeone, *Thes. Ant. Ital.*, vol. vi, *De Claris Mulieribus Patavinis*, col. 418.

3 *Biog. Dict.*, art. Laurentia Strozzi.

4 Creighton, *Hist. Essays and Reviews*, 'A Learned Lady of the Sixteenth Century', p. 151.

5 Erasmus, *Epist.*, ed. 1642, Lib. ii, Ep. 24.

Ludovico Vives, born in 1492, was educated at Valencia, and later entered the University of Paris where he gradually came to accept the humanistic views of the Renaissance. At Louvain, about 1520, began his friendship with Erasmus whose lectures at the Collège des Trois Langues he attended.[1] Erasmus regarded Vives as a promising young scholar, head and shoulders above his contemporaries, seeming rather to belong to the age of Cicero or of Seneca.[2] Queen Catharine, keenly alive to all that concerned her native land, especially favoured Spanish scholars who, like herself, had settled in other countries, and appears to have been Vives' benefactor during his stay at Louvain. His great edition of Augustine's *Civitas Dei*, published in 1522, was dedicated to Henry VIII. The following year, encouraged by Cardinal Wolsey, he came to England; his scholarship was recognized by the University of Oxford, which made him a D.C.L. and called upon him to lecture. Services of another kind were to entitle him to the grateful recognition of Englishwomen. Soon after his arrival, he was chosen by the queen, jointly with Linacre, to direct the studies of the Princess Mary, at that time a child seven years old, heiress to the throne of England and the nation's darling.

The association of Linacre with Vives was probably, as Professor Foster Watson has said, 'a conjoint medical and educational trust'.[3] Before his death (1524) Linacre wrote for the use of his little charge the *Rudimenta Grammatica* as a starting-point for her Latin studies. In 1523 Vives completed his famour Treatise on 'The Instruction of a Christian Woman', and a further 'Plan of Studies for a Girl' (*De Ratione Studii Puerilis*), both of which must receive separate consideration. These works were dedicated to Queen Catharine, in terms of sincerest admiration. Within a few years the Instruction was translated into Castilian; it did not appear in an English dress till

[1] Foster Watson, *Vives*, p. 12. [2] Erasmus, *Epist.*, Lib. xix, Ep. 101.
[3] Foster Watson, *Vives*, p. 14.

1540, after the queen's death, when it was printed posthumously, in a translation probably made between 1523 and 1528 by Richard Hyrde, a tutor in the household of Sir Thomas More.[1]

During the years of Vives' intimate connexion with the English Court, Sir Thomas More, Treasurer of the Exchequer, before the shadow fell which was to involve him in imprisonment and disgrace, was in close personal touch with Henry VIII.[2] Catharine entirely concurred in her husband's appreciation of 'the one sound counsellor in his kingdom'. He shared the learned interests of her followers; held Latin disputations with her chaplain, the Franciscan Father Alphonsus,[3] and vied with the Spanish scholar in admiration for the works of St. Augustine.

It requires no great stretch of the imagination to suppose that at court as in the intimacy of More's riverside home, conversation sometimes turned on a matter in which both men were personally concerned, the upbringing of girls. More had been for years past engaged in educating his family of motherless children: he had already converted Erasmus to his views on women's education, and the results had appeared in a Colloquy, full of wit and trenchant sarcasm, between an abbot of the old school and a learned lady of the new.[4] Vives had also his own well-founded opinions, a compound of things old and new, which he was now required to bring out of his treasury for the benefit of the king's daughter.[5]

[1] Foster Watson, loc. cit., Introd., p. 15.

[2] Cf. Cresacre More, *Life of Sir Thomas More*, p. 46.

[3] Ib., p. 112.

[4] Erasmus, *Colloquia*, ed. 1662, p. 282, 'Abbatis et Eruditae.'

[5] It is improbable that the actual duty of instructing the Princess Mary devolved upon Vives. For some time Queen Catharine undoubtedly taught her daughter herself. After her misfortunes and her withdrawal to Woburn she wrote a letter to Mary about a newly appointed tutor which deserves quotation. 'As for your writing in Lattine,' it runs, 'I am glad that ye shall chaunge from me to Maister Federston, for that shall doo you moche good to lerne by him to write right. But yet some tymes I wold be glad when ye doo write to Maister Federston of your owne enditing, when he hathe rede it that I may se it. For it shalbe a grete comfort to me to see you keepe your Latten and fayer writing and all . . .' Ellis, *Original Letters*, 1825, vol. ii, p. 19, Letter cvii.

A point has been reached in our survey when the Cinderella of social problems has become a subject of interest, even of personal enthusiasm, to a group of scholars of the first rank; hitherto regarded as of no serious importance, or as satisfactorily settled on the basis of pious tradition, it now deserves the scrutiny of a More, a Vives, an Erasmus; its tutelary spirit is a queen.

The three chief guardians of the infant movement differed in race, temperament, and outlook. Where Vives and Erasmus expressed their views forcibly enough through the written word, More's part was to build up, in his own home, a living exemplar, an ideal 'School or University for the training of Christian character'. As the master-hand in a successful experiment he is the boldest innovator; but he does not hesitate to transplant to the sphere of the family a cloistral severity. Games are strictly forbidden. During mealtimes one of his daughters reads aloud passages of the Bible, with the comments of some learned theologian, concluding with the prayer 'Tu autem domine, miserere nostri'.

Vives, always at heart a Spaniard, sprung of a civilization in which the old monastic ideals had assumed an uncompromising rigidity, gave place to the new ideas with a due caution, and his treatises form a bridge preventing any disastrous cleavage with the past. Erasmus, the homeless cosmopolitan scholar, fearless and bitterly outspoken, is unsparing in his condemnation of outworn methods; but, from a lack of close personal acquaintance with the problem, he rebuilds largely with the old materials, still unable to rid himself of a traditional mistrust of women; at the same time his schemes are humane, generous, essentially sound and practical. The attitude which he takes up towards the age-long prototype of female education, the mother of Our Lord, is significant of much. To Vives she is still, in her medieval aspect, a dominant figure: how was it possible for him to advocate greater liberty for a young girl when her secluded upbringing was based on the example of one 'called in

Hebrew, Alma, a virgin closed in'?[1] Erasmus, on the other hand, is more concerned to preserve some measure of veracity; he allows the vague tradition of Mary's learning to pass unchallenged, but his lash descends upon the abbot, the typical ecclesiastic, who ascribes to the Blessed Virgin, with unquestioning conviction, knowledge of the Benedictine Rule.[2] In spite, however, of characteristic differences in detail, the work of these three men was closely inter-related, and it may best be illustrated by a comparative study. Erasmus was a convert to More's views, the friend of More's well-learned daughters; his Colloquies are approved by Vives for girls' reading; three years after the composition of the Instruction, Erasmus embodied many of its axioms in his study of Christian marriage, made in homage to Queen Catharine; Vives developed the subject still further in his Duty of the Husband (*De Officio mariti*, 1529), and both the foreign writers instance with admiration the School of Sir Thomas More, that is, his educational practice.

Two outstanding characteristics are common to all these writers. The first is the importance given to the institution of marriage in the Christian community, hence the importance of a right choice in matrimony, and of educating a girl to take her place worthily by her husband's side in the making of a Christian home. So Plato had provided for the training of wives for the guardians of the state.[3] The second feature is the strong emphasis upon character-building: to build up the Christian character on firm foundations is a lifelong process, to be achieved not alone by the practice of piety but also by the continued harmonious development of all the powers of intellect, soul, and body.

At the outset, More's picture of the ideal wife is drawn in firm lines; 'may she be learned if possible', he quaintly exclaims, 'or at least capable of being made so'.[4] Her studies will assist her to discharge daily duties with courage

[1] Foster Watson, loc. cit., p. 86.
[2] Erasmus *Colloquia*, p. 285.
[3] *Republic*, Bk. V.
[4] Ballard, *Celebrated Ladies*, p. 39.

and equanimity as she learns from the thoughts of the greatest minds in what virtue consists; thus she will become a more delightful companion to her husband, a wiser teacher for her children. Her accomplishments, music, singing, and lute-playing, her powers of conversation, can but enrich and enliven home-life. The emphasis which More and his contemporaries place upon the continuance of a wife's education is largely accounted for by the early age at which, in their day, marriages frequently took place. Youth in a bride they felt to be an advantage, in so far as it afforded an opportunity to the husband of shaping tastes as yet unformed into harmony with his own. More's first girl-wife had come but little educated from her country home, and owed to him her training in music and letters: even his second wife, a woman of mature years, learned after her marriage, in deference to his wishes, to sing and play the harp.[1]

Erasmus and Vives also lay great stress upon the teaching office of the husband. Erasmus regards it as a weighty duty for a husband to imbue his young wife with the principles of Christian philosophy, possibly also to teach her Greek and Latin literature; even the duller sort of wife, who is best occupied in manual and domestic tasks, must learn to read her mother-tongue fluently, and when she goes to hear good sermons must listen intelligently, remember the main points of the argument, and be able to pass a searching, though always kindly, examination when she returns home; her husband has meanwhile sat under some other preacher.[2]

The reformers are much concerned with the question of education through the eye and ear, with the need of surrounding a child from earliest years with influences which may give it imperceptibly a bent towards virtuous living. On this account parental example is of immeasurable importance; it is in discussing the failure of parents to inculcate good habits that the writers take occasion

[1] Seebohm, *Oxford Reformers*, p. 313.

[2] Erasmus, *De Instit. Christ. Matrim.* (*Opera*, 1703), p. 690 et seq.

to comment most adversely on contemporary methods. The impressionableness of very young children is not sufficiently regarded and the beginnings of virtue are crushed by thoughtless mismanagement. Popular ideals of right living are indeed hopelessly at fault. 'Fathers, mothers, nurses, schoolmasters, kinsfolk, friends, acquaintance and the common people,' so Vives wrote indignantly, 'all these do what they can to pluck up those seeds of virtue by the roots and to overwhelm that little fire as soon as it beginneth to appear. But all they regard riches much and give honour unto nobility and reverence unto honour and seek for power and praise beauty and worship pomp and follow pleasures. But they tread poverty underfoot and mock simple minds. They suspect devotion and hate cunning and all kinds of virtue they call folly.'[1] In particular Vives condemns parental over-indulgence. 'No mother', he says, 'loved her child better than mine did me, nor any child did ever less perceive himself loved of his mother than I.' But because she neither lightly laughed at him nor unduly indulged him, his childish shrinking turned in adult life to an ardent admiration and gratitude.[2] He believes the rod should never be off the boy's back; 'especially', he adds, 'the daughters should be handled without any cherishing.'[3]

Erasmus, on the other hand, dreads over-severity: here the difference in temperament between the northern and southern parent whom the writers are considering must be borne in mind. The example of refined brutality given in the Christian Marriage is drawn from Erasmus's own acquaintance, presumably in Flanders; a little four-year old girl, scarce able to speak plain, is carefully instructed in courtly manners, and bidden to address her mother as 'Madame mama', and to say, instead of a bald 'no', 'salve votre grace, Madame'. When she fails to carry out her lesson, she is savagely beaten and dared to cry or shed one tear. Her mother's inhumanity, Erasmus adds, 'was

[1] Foster Watson, loc. cit., p. 127. 'Cunning,' i.e. knowledge.
[2] Ib., p. 131.
[3] Ib., p. 133.

reflected in the girl's very eyes, in which stood solid tears and a frantic expression such as there is wont to be in those terrified by a ghost'. Such treatment cannot be too forcibly condemned.[1]

The writers we are considering as a rule take it for granted that a girl's education will be carried out at home, in the earliest stages by her mother, in the later by the best teacher available. In this respect Sir Thomas More followed the Italian precedent, placing his children's instruction in the hands of learned scholars, who joined his household and shared the family life; fears of the kind which haunted the other writers had no place in that sane and healthful atmosphere. According to More's biographers, Margaret Roper's tutors were Dr. Clement, William Gunnell, 'one Drue, one Nicholas, and one Richard Hart', who is to be identified with Richard Hyrde.[2] Vives, in spite of his admiration for the royal mistress who had learnt her Latin from a Spanish lady, decides on the whole against employing women teachers; it 'becomes not a woman to rule a school',[3] as she has not as yet attained a sufficient mastery of ancient literature; he relents, however, so far as to prefer a 'holy and well-learned woman', if the right type of man cannot be found, a man that is 'either well-aged or else very good and virtuous, which hath a wife whom he loveth well'.[4] In the *Utopia* (1515–16) More contemplated co-education for boys and girls in school, and 'daybreak lectures' for adult men and women of all ranks who possessed studious tastes.[5]

The humanistic attitude was thus marked by an entirely novel conception of the importance of female instruction in relation to the life of the community. The Humanists desired also to unfold more harmoniously the human personality, for the sake of right living

[1] Erasmus, *De Instit. Christ. Matrim.*, p. 711.
[2] Foster Watson, *Vives*, Introduction, p. 15, and cf. p. 176.
[3] Ib., p. 55.
[4] Ib., p. 54.
[5] More's *Utopia*, trans. G. C. Richards, 1923, p. 51; cf. p. 68.

in this world as well as salvation in a world yet to be. Changes in method were inevitable once these ideas had become vital and influential. As we have seen, the range of studies for centuries considered specially appropriate for girls, although directed consistently heavenward, was yet extremely restricted. The Reformers, who were also scholars with an enthusiastic belief in the formative value of classic literature, extended the list of suitable subjects, especially as regards the study of the learned languages. Vives, clinging most closely to the old paths, thought that 'grammar, logic, histories, the rule of governance of the commonwealth and the art mathematical'[1] should be left to men, and deprecated the displays of feminine eloquence which were a remarkable feature of his age. Margaret Roper's accomplishments, however, included some acquaintance with Philosophy, Astronomy, Physic, Arithmetic, Logic, Rhetoric, and Music, besides a 'perfect mastery' of Greek and Latin which enabled her to write them fluently.[2] As the whole aim of this type of education was the shaping of character, a foremost place was given both by Erasmus and Vives to the study of moral philosophy, in order 'to subdue and bring under the affections and to pacify the tempests and unquietness of the mind',[3] and so to increase the virtue of self-control in which women were naturally deficient.

Of poetry and imaginative writings generally Vives had a rooted mistrust. In this direction indeed a difficulty soon made itself felt, especially by writers who were anxious not to injure their cause through any apparent flouting of accepted standards. It might easily be thought incompatible with a truly religious upbringing, to allow girls access to ancient writers from whom they would derive unsuitable, even pagan ideas. This anxiety was strengthened by an uneasy consciousness that for generations women had proved themselves insatiable readers and lovers of works of the imagination. Their old favourites

[1] Foster Watson, loc. cit., p. 205.
[2] Ballard, *Celebrated Ladies*, p. 41.
[3] Foster Watson, p. 204.

were now to be included in a general condemnation of all literature of supposed immoral tendency, literature, which, as so happened, lacked also classic form and a finished style. Vives banned in Spain the Amadis; in France, Lancelot du Lac, Ponthus and Sidonia, and Melusine; in Flanders, Pyramus and Thisbe; in England, Parthenope, Hippomedon, Arthur and Sir Guy, Bevis, and many another romance.[1] Erasmus,[2] More, and Ascham[3] took up the tale of abhorrence. It was comparatively easy to suggest satisfactory alternatives for readers of Latin and Greek, to recommend 'pagan' authors from whom 'right language and right living' could yet be learnt. The old standard books for studious and pious women, the works of Jerome and Ambrose, Cyprian and Augustine, and the songs of the Christian poets, were still to hold a foremost place. The Scriptures in the vernacular were now available for daily study. But it was not so easy to find materials which might replace for recreational reading the ubiquitous romance, and attract and yet edify those girls, the majority indeed, who had no opportunity of learning Greek or Latin. The novels and tales of such recent writers as Æneas Silvius and Boccaccio were only fit to be consigned to the bonfire with their elder compeers. The problem was in fact left unsolved. The gravity and severity of the programme set before girl-scholars by the Humanists, especially in England, cannot but impress a modern mind. It was perhaps their failure to recognize other and not less insistent demands that led to the very gradual and belated acceptance of their sterling principles of education.

Side by side with the new interest in human character and its development was growing up a new interest in the world of nature, the setting of human life; the world of which the scope and variety were being unveiled by

[1] Foster Watson, *Vives*, p. 59.

[2] Erasmus, *De Instit. Christ. Matrim.*, p. 716: 'Amorous fables are violent poison for young maids.'

[3] Ascham, *Scholemaster*, Works, loc. cit., p. 255.

the discoveries of adventurers in uncharted seas. Here was a field in which girls and boys started fairly together; one which had no drawback in the direction of morals, but was an inspiring influence. More's daughters were taught to delight especially in the study of astronomy; there is a characteristic passage in one of his letters bearing on these lessons and delightfully illustrating the mixture of gaiety and grave idealism which is the charm of his relation to his 'best beloved' children.

'I hear', he writes to his 'whole school', 'that you have proceeded so far in this science that you now know not only the polestar or dog, and such like of the common constellations, but also, (which argueth an absolute and cunning astronomer) in the chief planets themselves you are able to discern the sun from the moon. Go forward therefore with this your new and admirable skill, by which you do thus climb up to the stars.'[1]

A contemporary French writer in an eulogy of Princess Mary's behaviour under her father's harsh treatment speaks admiringly of the extent of her learning, which included the elements of natural science and mathematics:

> . . . à sçavoir raison du mouvement
> Et le secret de tout le firmament,
> Du monde aussi la scituation,
> Des elements l'association,
> Puis sagement avec mathématique
> Meslait raison, morale, politique . . .[2]

Modern languages do not occupy any very prominent place in the Reformers' curricula, although Erasmus's Colloquy refers to the French books usually to be seen in the apartments of great ladies:[3] all are, however, agreed upon the importance of vernacular studies.

The care of bodily health is not passed over. Erasmus, full of good sense, has much to say on the subject of diet, and draws attention to the stupid practice of dressing little girls in heavy, unsuitable garments that weigh

[1] Foster Watson, *Vives*, pp. 182–3.
[2] Crapelet, *Lettres de Henri VIII*, p. 188.
[3] Erasmus, *Colloquia*, p. 282.

down their tender bodies and restrict their limbs; he even remarks on the foot-gear made for their use with soles of double-thick hide only suitable for a shoe-fight.[1] As regards physical exercise, it suffices for a girl if she goes actively from room to room about her household tasks.[2] Dancing, which is popular alike with parents and daughters, has grave moral dangers. 'What holy woman', says Vives, following loyally the best patristic opinion, 'did we ever read of that was a dancer? Or what woman nowadays that is sad and wise will be known to skill of dancing, and will not refuse it if she be desired to dance?'[3]

The teaching of domestic science and handicraft was consistently advocated by the new educators as by the old, although Erasmus boldly affirmed books to be better than weaving as a pastime, because their attraction outlasted youth. In More's ideal state, girls and boys received a practical training in agriculture during their schooldays.[4]

The system of education here described had in view the formation of a noble and exalted type of Christian character. However it may have fallen short of universal acceptance, even of practicability, owing to the too severe demand it made upon the average intelligence, there can be no doubt that it produced for its own age a remarkable group of women. More's daughters were a centre of interest to their contemporaries. John Voysey, Bishop of Exeter, having seen by chance some of Margaret Roper's letters, marvelled not only at their Latinity and the fact that they were written by a young woman but also at the beauty of character they disclosed.[5] Erasmus appreciated in all three girls their charming friendliness, their modesty, simplicity, and mutual understanding; he describes their skilful handling of various musical instruments, their flitting like bees 'through every kind of author in both languages, making here a note of something by which to take example, reading here some pleasant tale which may

[1] Erasmus, *De Instit. Christ. Matrim.*, p. 711.
[2] Ib., p. 663.
[3] Foster Watson, *Vives*, p. 103.
[4] *Utopia*, loc. cit., p. 50.
[5] Ballard, *Celebrated Ladies*, pp. 41–2.

be retold to their companions.'[1] Leland composed Latin verses in their honour:

> Nos tamen intrantes facundi limina Mori,
> Attoniti Charites tres novitate rei
> Vidimus.[2]

If there is occasionally a touch of sententiousness about these grave-eyed children, who practise themselves even on a journey in 'making of declamations, composing of verses or in logick exercises',[3] it is forgiven for the sake of the unspoilt humility which More was so pathetically eager at all costs to preserve. 'That this plague may the faster be banished from my children,' are his words to one of their tutors,

> 'I earnestly desire that you, my dear Gunnell, their mother and all their friends would still sing this song upon them, hammer it always in their heads, . . . that vain glory is abject and to be despised, neither anything to be more worthy and excellent than that humble modesty which is so much praised by Christ.'[4]

There can be no greater test of an educational system than its ability to arouse enthusiasm in teacher and pupil alike. This indeed was the test which the Reformers themselves applied. 'Studies,' wrote Erasmus, 'if they have begun to please, spur the mind to a wilder enthusiasm than any other of the arts, . . . and never fail their worshippers on to extreme old age.'[5] So More could describe, in a phrase of curious intensity, the learning that seemed to bind him to his children 'more straitly than nearness of blood',[6] while scholars like Grynæus observed 'a divine heat of spirit'[7] in his young daughters.

Then, too, how many of the men and women who were pioneers and scholars in this spiritual adventure had occasion to put to the trial of extreme adversity that solace, the sufficiency of which in all the chances of life they had

1 Erasmus, *Epist.*, Dedication to John More of Ovid de Nuce, Lib. xxi, Ep. xxvi, col. 1744 e.
2 S. Knight, *Life of Erasmus*, (1726), App., p. cxli.
3 Foster Watson, *Vives*, p. 186.
4 Ib., p. 181.
5 Erasmus, *De Instit. Christ. Matrim.*, p. 663.
6 Foster Watson, *Vives*, p. 182.
7 Ib., p. 187.

so persistently advocated, the solace, that is, of religion and true learning? Queen Catharine, dying slowly of a broken heart, remained in the minds of her contemporaries an heroic figure triumphant over her woes and sufferings; Margaret Roper, laid to rest in the prime of womanhood, her father's severed head clasped in her arms, was still the 'Meg' whose high spirit was not to be dejected; the Lady Jane Grey, her ruling passion strong in death, poring to the last on the Greek Testament and writing farewell to her only sister in the Latin tongue, expressed for all her company the note of indomitable courage when she scrawled the words upon her prison wall

Per tenebras spero lucem.

IX

THE TUDOR PARAGONS

1. *Introductory*

THE School of Sir Thomas More may be said to have focussed on the hitherto arid field of women's education certain vivifying influences. Just as, in general, England had been slow to adopt Renaissance ideas until the scholars of the Universities led the way, so, in this particular, More's practical example encouraged a group of Englishmen of high position to give their daughters wider opportunity, in the shape of an education in classic literature and in 'the living modern languages of highest reputation'. Many of these girls inherited intellectual gifts, and the result of the experiment was startlingly successful. It gave confidence, where none had existed, in a girl's ability to learn, excited a widespread admiration gratifying to national pride, and created for womanhood a great and unforgotten tradition.

'Do we not see in our country', wrote Mulcaster, looking back on a brilliancy that had already begun to fade, 'some of that sex so excellently well trained and so rarely qualified in regard both to the tongues themselves and to the subject-matter contained in them, that they may be placed along with, or even above, the most vaunted paragons of Greece or Rome, or the German and French gentlewomen so much praised by recent writers, or the Italian ladies who dare even to write themselves and deserve fame for so doing.'[1]

The fashion for learning in high places, emanating from girls so modest and unassuming as the Mores, culminated in a blaze of glory with Elizabeth herself, and undoubtedly did much permanently to raise the general average of attainments among women, although not as much nor so rapidly as might well have been expected. The stream of learning ran close beside, intermingled with,

[1] Oliphant, *Educational Writings of Richard Mulcaster*, p. 52.

the stream of reform in religion, and, pre-eminently in the case of Englishwomen, the one for a time overwhelmed the other. The gathering forces of Puritanism had first to work out their destiny, and in that development, by a curious irony, the classic training of Tudor gentlewomen, the special uses to which they put their facility in Greek and Latin, played a distinctive part. These then are the outlines which it now remains for us to illustrate in detail.

2. *England and France*

The Age of the Renaissance was an age of hero-worship; in the exhilaration of new-found powers, the paragons of various European countries were not slow to take the infection of enthusiasm one from another. In the case of Italy and Spain some corroborative illustration has already been given; the intercourse of France and England within the great cosmopolitan movement still awaits comment. At the French Court Renaissance feminist ideas were introduced by Anne de Bretagne, wife of Louis XII, a patroness of writers and poets, and her two daughters.[1] These princesses were, however, eclipsed by their kinswoman Marguerite D'Angoulême, sister of Francis I, successively the wife of Charles, last Duke d'Alençon, and of Henri D'Albrêt, King of Navarre.

Marguerite has been called 'the Mother of the Renaissance in France'; she was at all events one of the most remarkable women of her age in Europe, and her career well illustrates the overwhelming appeal which the new education made to women possessing intellectual gifts.

There is a body of testimony to the admiration with which her contemporaries in England regarded La Reine Marguerite, her learning, her authorship, her enlightened piety. The book written in her honour by the daughters of Protector Somerset, and the translation by the Princess Elizabeth of her mystical treatises are outstanding examples. It is significant that in her, no less than in the daughters of the later Renaissance in Italy, like Olympia

[1] Cf. Rousselot, loc. cit., vol. i, p. 168.

Morata, there is represented a gradual fusion of that two-fold stream, the liberation of letters and the liberation of religious thought, which in the case of Englishwomen was complete almost from the first.

A channel of direct intercourse between the French Court and the Court of the Tudors at this epoch of intellectual brilliancy, was opened for a brief period by the marriage of Mary Tudor, youngest daughter of Henry VII, with Louis XII, which took place at Abbeville in 1514. Mary had all the intelligence of her race and combined considerable vigour of character with great personal beauty and attractiveness. Her education began when she was four years old, with the appointment among her household of a schoolmaster, at a salary of 66*s.* 8*d.* a quarter. She was carefully instructed in French and Latin and in the courtly accomplishments, music, dancing, and embroidery, and in her way she was a finished product of the older system. When Philip and Joanna la Loca of Castile were driven by storms on to the English coast in 1506, an eyewitness of their reception at Henry VII's Court describes how the Lady Mary, then ten years old, danced with the guests and played upon the claregalls and her lute, the king's gift; 'she played very well, and was of all folk there greatly praised.' More important, in view of her destinies, were the French studies pursued under her tutors, Giles Duwes and, later, John Palsgrave, chaplain to Henry VIII.[1] Palsgrave composed for his royal pupil a grammar, *L'esclarcissement de la langue Françoyse*, characterized by a recent writer as the first systematized attempt to formulate rules for the French language or any modern tongue.[2] Thanks to this careful instruction the princess was able to correspond in French with her future husband with much credit and dignity.[3]

To Mary's grief and dismay, the morning after her arrival in France, the greater number of her English

[1] Wood, *Lives of the Princesses of England*, vol. v, pp. 3 and 4.
[2] Cf. Lambley, loc. cit., p. 86 et seq.
[3] Cf. Ellis, *Original Letters*, 1825, vol. i, p. 113.

retinue were dismissed. She complained to her brother, the King of England, that none had been left her 'except such as never had experiens nor knowlech how to advertyse or gyfe me counsell yn any tyme of nede';[1] among them was the seven-year old Anne Boleyn. The circle in which Mary passed her few days of queenship had undoubtedly retained, from the example of Anne de Bretagne, a certain dignity and seriousness in which it bears comparison with the Court of Catharine of Aragon. La Reine Anne had concerned herself with the education, above all the moral education, of the young girls attached to her household. These standards lasted on through the régime of Anne's daughter, the gracious Claude de France, after which another fashion of manners gradually prevailed.[2] It was in the degenerate surroundings of the Court of Henry II and Catherine de' Medici that Mary Stuart, wife of the Dauphin Francis, pronounced before the king her Latin oration on women's capacity for knowledge.[3]

Of the successive queens of Henry VIII, Jane Seymour and Katherine Howard were both 'ardent admirers of the French tongue'.[4] Anne of Cleves was deficient in this essential part of a courtly training. Like most German princesses of her age she was not learned. 'Frenche, Latyn or other langaige, she hath none,' wrote Nicholas Wotton in a report on her suitability to be the successor of Jane Seymour, 'nor yet she canne not synge nor pleye enye instrument, for they take it heere in Germanye for a rebuke and an occasion of lightenesse that great ladyes shuld be lernyd or have enye knowledge of musike.'[5]

3. *The Second School of Sir Thomas More*

On the death of Louis XII Mary Tudor returned to England already the bride of Charles Brandon, Duke of

[1] Ellis, loc. cit., p. 116.
[2] Rousselot, loc. cit., vol. i, p. 168.
[3] Ib., p. 180.
[4] Lambley, loc. cit., p. 72.
[5] Gairdner, *Letters and Papers*, vol. xiv, Part II, 33 (p. 9).

Suffolk. She had sufficient taste for books to carry on the study of Latin,[1] and she carefully educated her children, providing for her son, Henry, Earl of Lincoln, in Pierre Valence, the author of *Introductions in Frensche*,[2] such a tutor as she herself had had. Her daughter, Frances Brandon, forms an appropriate link between the first and second generation of Renaissance women-scholars in England. To her, 'a most studyous and virtuous yonge mayde' of seven years old, Richard Hyrde addressed in 1524 the Introduction to Margaret Roper's translation of Erasmus's Treatise on the Lord's Prayer, 'the first Renascence document in English on the education of women', in which he thus defends their study of the ancient tongues: 'The Latin and the Greek tongue I see not but there is as little hurt in them as in books of English and French. . . . And also can bear well enough, that women read them, if they will, never so much.' [3]

The knowledge of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew for English scholars of the Renaissance was pre-eminently a key to the Scriptures, and to the Early Christian Fathers, whose works had been for centuries a favourite and permitted study for women. During the troublous reigns of Edward VI and Mary, when the religious future of England was continually in the balance, the influences brought to bear upon women of intelligence, still tingling with a new sense of intellectual freedom, were just those most likely to give to theological studies a paramount importance. If much of the atmosphere of a religious house lingered about More's home in Chelsea, and his daughters were accustomed to an almost monastic discipline, the women of the following generation were surrounded by controversies and religious strife acute beyond anything that had penetrated into convent walls. The prevailing tone finds an echo in Udall's preface to the Translation of Erasmus's Paraphrase of St. John's Gospel, made, with the assistance of Francis Mallet, by the Princess Mary, at the request of

[1] Foster Watson, *Vives*, p. 172. [2] Lambley, loc. cit., p. 80.
[3] Foster Watson, *Vives*, p. 165.

Katherine Parr, and published in 1548. Udall draws the queen dowager's attention to

'the great number of noble women at that time in England not only given to the study of humane sciences and strange tongues but also so thoroughly expert in Holy Scriptures that they were able to compare with the best writers, as well in enditeing and penning of godly and fruitful treatises to the instruction and edifying of realmes in the knowledge of God, as also in translating good books out of Latin or Greek into English, for the use and commodity of such as are rude and ignorant of the said tongues. It was now (he added) no news in England to see young damsels in noble houses and in the courts of princes, instead of cards and other instruments of idle trifling, to have continually in their hands either Psalms, homilies or other devout meditations, or else Paul's epistles, or some book of holy scripture matters; and as familiarly both to read or reason thereof in Greek, Latin, French or Italian as in English. It was now a common thing to see young virgins so trained in the study of good letters that they willingly set all other vain pastimes at nought for learning's sake. It was now no news at all to see Queens and ladies of most high estate and progeny, instead of courtly dalliance, to embrace virtuous exercises of reading and writing, and with most earnest study both early and late to apply themselves to the acquiring of knowledge, as well in all other liberal artes and disciplines as also most especially of God and His holy word.'[1]

The ardour for religious knowledge was no new thing among Englishwomen, but it now took a new shape: the daughters of the nobility, hitherto educated in nunneries, having acquired a more substantial background of learning, interested themselves in bringing theological books within reach of their less instructed sisters; by means of treatises of their own composition, of paraphrase and translation, they set to work to provide weapons which might avail in the life and death struggles, never far distant from any one of them. Udall addressed his remarks to Katherine Parr, and presumably had in mind the court circle of her day, courtly society that is, as it had been shaped by Catharine of Aragon, and forced into the contemplation of life's

[1] Ballard, loc. cit., p. 127.

uncertainty and the consolations of religion, if only by her fate and the fate of her immediate successors in the king's favour. There had indeed been a time, during the latter part of Henry VIII's reign, when no one with any zeal for piety would send his daughter into the royal service, and the court of the Princess Mary was sought after as the only suitable place for 'honourable young gentlewomen'.[1] With the arrival of Katherine Parr the old standards were re-established. She herself, as well as her sister Anne, Countess of Pembroke, Ascham's correspondent, had been brought up avowedly on the model of Sir Thomas More's daughters.[2] Her taste for learning was recognized; it formed a sympathetic link between her and the princesses, Mary and Elizabeth.

It is indeed easy to identify many of the figures in the foreground of Udall's picture. We have for our guidance the roll of illustrious Englishwomen added by William Bercher to his translation of Ludovico Domenichi's treatise called *The Nobylyte off Wymen*; there Margaret Roper and her daughter, Queen Mary, and the Lady Elizabeth, 'in whose tender yearis is seene so wonderfull towardnes of awntyent vertue as is great comforte to all hyr contrye', are followed successively by Lady Jane Howard, the daughters of Lord Protector Somerset, Lady Jane Grey and her sisters, the daughters of the Earl of Arundel, and the daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke.[3]

The greater number of these girls, who form a new court of the Muses, were daughters of prominent men of the time, of those in fact who, at first under the leadership of Protector Somerset, were systematically endeavouring in the light of the new learning to 'get rid of catholic doctrine'. More's daughters were not the only women to associate in friendship with the Reformers of various

[1] H. Clifford, *Life of Jane Dormer, Duchess of Feria*, ed. Rev. J. Stevenson, 1887, p. 62.

[2] Ascham, ed. Giles, Letter XLII.

[3] Bercher, *The Nobylyte off Wymen*, Roxburghe Club, 1904, ed. R. Warwick Bond, p. 152.

schools of thought. Sir Anthony Cooke, the father of Anna, Lady Bacon, and Mildred, Lady Burghley, who was tutor to Edward VI, was an exile in Geneva during the Marian persecution.[1] The tutor of Lady Jane Howard, daughter of Henry, Earl of Surrey, and afterwards Countess of Westmoreland, was Foxe the Martyrologist, who so instructed her that 'greke and lattyne was vulgar unto her, her composycon in verse notable'.[2] Anne, the eldest daughter of Protector Somerset, who married the Earl of Warwick, was a pupil of Cranmer and corresponded with Calvin.[3]

In Katherine Parr's household the youngest of the damsels was the Lady Jane Grey, born 1537, the eldest daughter of Henry Grey, Marquis of Dorset, and Frances Brandon. She entered the queen's service at nine years old, and remained with her till her death in September 1548, acting as chief mourner at the funeral.[4] In her home at Bradgate she studied under Harding and Aylmer, her father's chaplains, and in the words of a contemporary 'came to such a large proficiency that she spake the Latin and Greek tongues with as sweet a fluency as if they had been natural and native to her, [and was] exactly skilled in liberal sciences and perfectly well studied in both kinds of philosophy'.[5] Others remark on her knowledge of French and Italian, even of Hebrew, Arabic, and Chaldee.[6] Foxe thought her superior to Edward VI in 'noble studies', and her gentle gravity and extraordinary learning proved dangerously attractive to the young king and had their part in drawing envious eyes upon her and, at last, in bringing her to the scaffold. She shared Edward's admiration for Martin Bucer who, on her own showing, had been her guide in spiritual matters; after Bucer's death she looked for direction to the learned pastor of Zurich, Henry Bullinger, whose acquaintance she probably made through his pupil John ab Ulmis, an associate of her

[1] *D.N.B.*, art. Anthony Cooke, *passim*.
[2] Bercher, loc. cit., p. 152.
[3] Lambley, p. 84.
[4] *D.N.B.*, art. Jane Dudley, *passim*.
[5] *State Trials*, vol. i, p. 736.
[6] Ib., p. 730.

father's. Three Latin letters written to Bullinger before her marriage, when she was seventeen, are extant: they are less familiar than the story of her interview with Ascham at Bradgate yet they throw light upon her character and eager, idealistic temperament, and have a special interest for our study. In the earliest she entreats Bullinger, when he takes Bucer's place in her counsels, to be as ready as his predecessor to apply the spur should he see her falling into dilatory habits. She longs to make full use of her association with illustrious men, to acquire of them as much piety and erudition as Blesilla, Paula, and Eustochium had once learned of St. Jerome. Beauty rank, fortune, these had been worthless to the women of old, so long only as they could attain to follow the highest. 'That you may deign to do this service for me also', the letter concludes, 'I beg of you, again and again.'[1]

The other letters, if less noteworthy than this, in which the daughter of the Reformation links herself with an ancient educational tradition, still illustrate the grave charm, the admixture of stateliness with an utter humility, which as a rule characterized the Renaissance gentlewomen.

The type of tutor chosen for these young gentlewomen; their association in many households with French or Italian refugees, the victims of religious persecution; the prevailing spirit of days of disunion and of martyrdom for the faith; all these made inevitably for a pre-occupation with theology rather than polite letters, and account for the fact that their literary output, even their first schoolgirl efforts, was confined to religious treatises, studies of Holy Scripture, translations of leading polemic works, which were the armouries of controversy. To the Princess Mary's paraphrase of Erasmus already mentioned, Elizabeth, who corresponded with her stepmother in Italian,[2] added a little book, which, at the age of eleven, she had

[1] N. H. Nicholas, *Literary Remains of Lady Jane Grey*, 1825, p. 2.

[2] Wood's *Letters*, vol. iii, p. 176.

translated from French rhyme to English prose, the Queen of Navarre's *Mirror of the Sinful Soul*; 'howbeit', she wrote in sending it to Katherine Parr, 'it is like a work which is but new begun and shapen, the file of your excellent wit and godly learning in the reading of it shall rub out, polish and mend the words, the which I know in many places to be rude and nothing done as it should be.'[1]

The literary remains of the Lord Protector's daughters are of a different type, and deserve consideration rather from the circumstances under which they were published than from any great artistic merit. These girls, two of whom corresponded in Latin with Edward VI,[2] had, for three years, besides their English tutor, Cranmer, a French tutor, Nicholas Denisot, poet and artist, who has been called the 'Ambassador of the French Renaissance in England'. He no doubt imparted to his young pupils, Anne, Margaret, and Jane, aged eleven, his own enthusiasm for the pearl of queens, Margaret of Valois. On her death in 1549 they composed in her honour a series of four hundred Latin Distichs, published in Paris, with a Latin title-page, by Denisot in 1550. In the next year the little volume reappeared, on this occasion with a title-page in French, and a dedication to Madame Marguerite, Duchesse de Berry. It was now entitled: 'Le Tombeau de Marguerite de Valois, royne de Navarre. Faict premièrement en Distiques Latins par les trois Sœurs, Princesses en Angleterre. Depuis traduictz en Grec, Italien et François par plusieurs des excellentz Poëtes de la France 1551.' Denisot's introduction of 'les vers divins de ces trois divines et doctes Sœurs, vierges Angloises', a model of high-flown rhetoric, tells of the writers' love and reverence for the dead queen, not on account of her rank but of her incredible learning, and admirable piety. A second address to the young poetesses themselves by Nicholas de

[1] Wood, *Letters*, vol. iii, p. 179. For further details of the writings of Katherine Parr, Margaret Roper, and her daughter, Lady Burleigh, Lady Bacon, and others, see Ballard, *Celebrated Ladies*, *passim*.

[2] Ib., p. 199.

Herberay, Seigneur des Essarts, the translator of Amadis de Gaul, assures them of the laurel-crown, for neither Sappho nor Cassandra, Cornelia, nor Lilia Sabini could have done more to keep alive the fame of La Reine Marguerite: 'car nulle d'elles (pour vieille qu'elle fust) ne donna jamais attainte (come ie pense) au Trophée ou vous autres trois (mes Dames si ieunes d'aage) avez attaché les despouilles.' In a delightful mock-seriousness he composes for them an epitaph on the model of one on the tomb of Amethea, daughter of Aristipes: 'Cy dessoubz reposent les cendres d'Anne, Marguerite et Iane lumière et l'honneur des dames d'Angleterre, qui eurent en elles la beaulté d'Helène, l'Honnesteté de Thirme, l'esprit de Socrate, la langue d'Homère et le bien-escripre de Cranne leur precepteur.' Finally, he invites them to visit the tomb of their heroine, 'Venez donc, venez, et n'ayez crainte que l'Ocean, qui fait barrière entre nous et vous, vous porte defaueur, car il n'y aura onde, ni vent doux ou tempestueux qui ne se rende propice a vous conduyre et guider'.

Yet another ornament of this little volume is the Ode with which 'Pierre de Ronsard, Vandomois', celebrates the fame of the three sisters, and in them the union of the beaux esprits of England and France in a war upon Ignorance. If with so gallant an escort as the Pléiade, and with gestures so magnificent, the Ladies Margaret, Anne, and Jane Seymour made their bow to the world of letters, the youthfulness of their productions may well be forgiven, and the reader in welcoming a few examples of the famous Distichs for their commendable industry need entertain no very high expectation of original thought.

Distichs from *Le Tombeau de Marguerite de Valois*:

Anna, 16.

Margaridis tumulo si non bona verba preceris
Vel Christi ignarus vel malè gratus homo es.

Margarita, 17.

Si qua dei pura de religione fideque
Promeruit laudem, Margaris illa fuit.

Jana, 18.

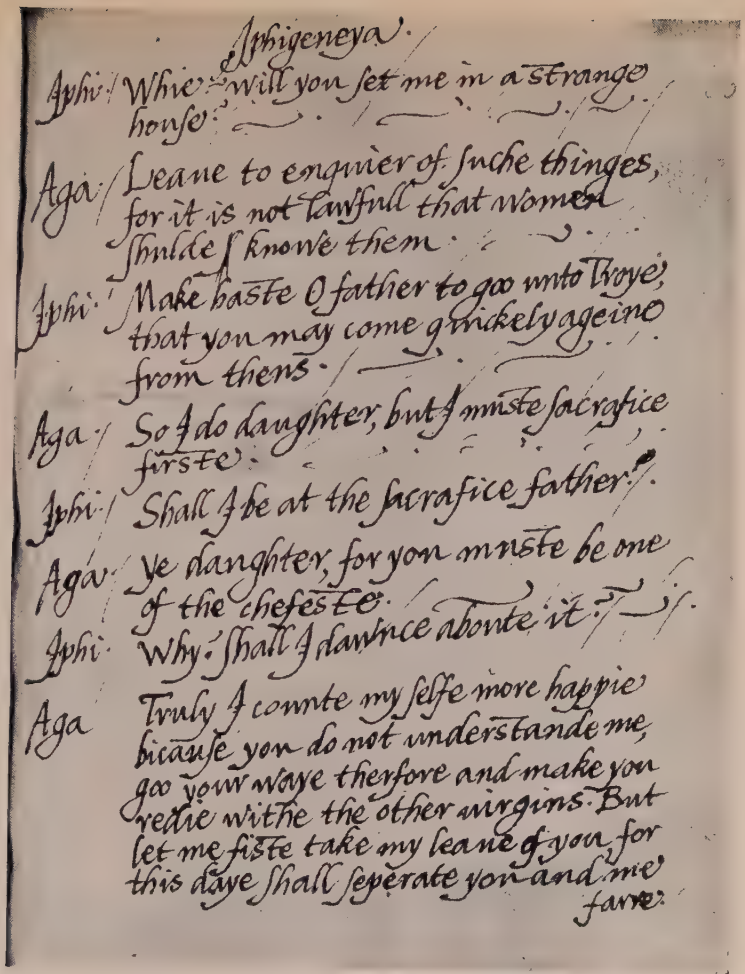
Hîc cui nostra parem prisci neque temporis ętas
Nec similem cernent secla futura, iacet.

While the extreme youth of many 'learned ladies' might seem at first sight to discount the admiration of their contemporaries, two facts must be borne in mind. If indeed they were precocious, in an age of precocity, the love of classic literature had been so successfully inculcated that it remained with them all their days. And again, they undoubtedly had great facility in reading and writing, even apparently in speaking, both Latin and Greek, a facility which reflects credit on the methods of their teachers. From this point of view, their learned exercises, some of which are still preserved in manuscript, are of interest and value. They show the importance attached to translating Greek into Latin or Greek into English, as well as to original composition of a simple character, such as letter-writing. The exercises of Lady Jane Fitz Alan, daughter of the Earl of Arundel, afterwards Lady Lumley, are written in a clear, childish hand, page after page without erasure, and consist of a Latin rendering of certain Orations of Isocrates, a favourite study also of Queen Elizabeth. One copy preceded by a Latin letter is a New Year's offering to Lord Arundel from his daughter; 'filia tua tibi deditissima'. A similar dedication describes with perfect sincerity the writer's pleasure in her task:

'Ex huius lectione incredibilem semper cepi voluptatem. Nam in verborum splendore est elegans, compositione aptus, facultate copiosus, sententiis sapiens, et genere toto gravis. Hunc divinius Plato suum fere aequalem admirabiliter in Phaedro laudari facit a Socrate . . . Quare oro quaeso-que ut hanc meam rudem indoctamque versionem in bonam partem accipias.'[1]

If there is here no great scholarship there is, for a young girl, a real enthusiasm. The translation of the *Iphigenia* of Euripides into English, which follows in the same copy-book, is not without spirit.

[1] Brit. Mus. Royal MS. 15 A ix.


Iphigeneya.

Iphi. Whie will you set me in a strange house.

Aga. Leane to enquier of suche thinges, for it is not lawfull that women shulde s knowe them.

Iphi. Make haste O father to goo unto Troye, that you may come quickely ageine from thens.

Aga. So I do daughter, but I muste sacrafice firste.

Iphi. Shall I be at the sacrafice father.

Aga. Ye daughter, for you muste be one of the chefeste.

Iphi. Why. Shall I dawnce aboute it.

Aga. Truly I counte my selfe more happie bicause you do not understande me, goo your waye therfore and make you redie withe the other virgins. But let me fiste take my leane of you for this daye shall seperate you and me farre.

IX. A page from the translation of Iphigenia

Made by Lady Jane FitzAlan (*c.* 1535–76), daughter of the Earl of Arundel, afterwards Lady Lumley

'Her learned exercises are written in a clear childish hand, page after page without erasure', p. 180

4. *Under Queen Mary*

The martyrdom of English men and women between the years 1553 and 1558, described and illustrated in Foxe's Book of Martyrs, became, from the date of the book's appearance, a potent formative influence especially among women. In other respects, notices of girls' education during Mary's short and troublous reign are few and scattered. Examples drawn from the two opposing parties may be given here.

One of Mary's ladies-in-waiting, Jane Dormer, afterwards Duchess of Feria (b. 1538), was brought up on orthodox lines in her grandmother Lady Dormer's house, where a number of young gentlewomen of good family were placed to learn good education and virtue. Before she was seven she began to read the primer or office of Our Blessed Lady in Latin: and she attained great skill in 'curious work of the needle', embroidering hangings for the altar.[1] A somewhat full autobiographical account of the education of Grace Sherrington, afterwards Lady Mildmay, born in 1552, the second of the three daughters and co-heiresses of Sir Henry Sherrington of Lacock Abbey, shows far more progressive tendencies.[2] Grace was brought up by Mistress Hamblyn, a poor relation, perhaps the first governess in the modern sense of the word, who was not merely a 'duenna' of the old type. Looking back upon her youthful days, Lady Mildmay gratefully remembered her teacher's special fitness for the task, her ready intelligence, good judgement, powers of observation and insight into character; her quick humour and good sense in everyday affairs; above all, her uprightness and high principle:

'She advised us to deal truly and faithfully in all things, both in small matters and in greate, to beware of all lyes and oathes and reporting of newes; to heare much and to speake little, seeming to be ignorant in some things rather than to boast of knowledge that we have not and thereby give occasion to be laughed att . . . I

[1] *Life of Jane Dormer*, loc. cit. p. 59.

[2] R. Weigall, 'An Elizabethan Gentlewoman,' *Quarterly Review*, 1911.

delighted soe much in her companye that I would sit with her all daye in her chamber and by my goodwill would never goe from her, embracing allwaies her rebukes and reproofs,'

which, it may be added, did not spare the rod.

Mistress Hamblyn was not a learned woman but she was a good letter-writer, accountant, and herbalist, and had other accomplishments. When Grace Sherrington at fifteen married Anthony Mildmay she carried to her new home the habits of devotion and the varied interests acquired under her good governess.

'God did put into my mynde,' she says, 'many good delights wherein I spent my time allmost continually. First in divinitie every day, as my leasure would give me leave and the Grace of God permitt and drawe me. . . . Also every day I spent some tyme in playing on my lute and setting songs of five parts thereunto, and practised my voice in singing of psalmes and prayers and confessing my sinnes, which were ever ready to meet me in every thought and to turn me always from God and from goodnesse. Also every day I spent some time in the Herball and books of phisick, and in ministering to one or another by the directions of the best phisitions of myne acquaintance; and ever God gave a blessing thereunto. Also every day I spent some tyme in works of myne owne invention, without sample or pattern before me for carpett or cushion worke, and to drawe flowers and fruitt to their lyfe with my plumett upon paper. All which varietie did greatly recreate my mynde; for I thought of nothing else but that I was doing in every particular one of these exercises. . . .'

The whole description admirably illustrates a girl's upbringing in those families which, already in Mary's reign, by the simplicity and spirituality of their daily lives and their pious exercises based upon a study of the Bible, were shaping the earliest type of Puritanism.

5. *The Age of Elizabeth*

Foremost in the galaxy of feminine talent stood, it need scarcely be said, Elizabeth herself. When all allowance for the bias of flattery has been duly made, there remains a remarkable body of testimony to her learning,

her amazing, though incomplete, gift of languages, her natural aptitude for study and life-long perseverance in intellectual pursuits. In her troubled girlhood her upbringing had been superintended by the usual duenna or governess, Mrs. Mildred Ashley, whose dismissal, on suspicion of an intrigue to marry the princess to the Lord High Admiral Seymour, Elizabeth sorely resented. She shared at first her brother's classical studies, overwhelming the delicate boy by her vigorous character, and later had her own tutor, William Grindal. On his death Roger Ascham succeeded to the post, and from his indulgent pen can be learnt most about the attainments of the mistress he faithfully served and admired without stint.

'The lady Elizabeth', he wrote in 1550 to his friend John Sturmius, Rector of the Protestant University of Strasburg, 'has accomplished her sixteenth year. She has the most ardent love of true religion and of the best kind of literature. The constitution of her mind is exempt from female weakness, and she is endued with a masculine power of application. . . . French and Italian she speaks like English; Latin with fluency, propriety and judgement; she also spoke Greek with me, frequently willingly, and moderately well. Nothing can be more elegant than her handwriting, whether in the Greek or Roman character. In music she is very skilful but does not greatly delight. . . . She read with me almost the whole of Cicero and a great part of Livy; from these two authors indeed her knowledge of the Latin language has been almost exclusively derived. The beginning of the day was always devoted by her to the New Testament in Greek, after which she read select orations of Isocrates and the tragedies of Sophocles. . . . For her religious instruction she drew first from the fountains of scripture and afterwards from St. Cyprian, the 'Commonplaces' of Melancthon, and similar works which convey pure doctrine in elegant language.'[1]

The most interesting aspect of Elizabeth's learning is her persistence, after her accession, in making it subserve the ends of queenship. Consciously or unconsciously she embodied the time-honoured idea that exceptional accomplishment is required of those born to rule; from the

[1] Aikin, *Memoirs of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. i, p. 945; and cf. Ascham, *Schole-master*, loc cit., p. 242.

philosophy of ancient times no less than from the modern theories of 'The Prince' she set herself to acquire all that could be learnt from books of the art of government. To this end she read with Ascham in Greek the Orations of Aeschines and Demosthenes, observing carefully not merely the idiom but 'the whole grounds of contention, the decrees of the people, the customs and manners of the Athenians'. From Xenophon also she translated 'A Dialogue between Hiero a King and Simonides a Poet, as touching the life of the Prince and private man'. Ballard has well summarized the opinion of contemporary writers:

'She did not make it her business whilst reading the best Latin authors to furnish her memory only with grammatical observations or a plenty of elegant phrases . . . to adorn her style or exalt her reputation for learning: but she treasured up those precepts very carefully which were useful for the government of her life, or for the managing her private affairs, or those of the state, well and wisely. . . . There was not one remarkable story or expression in all the works of Thucidides and Xenophon pertaining to the government of life or manners, or to the ordering publick affairs, but she had it by heart.'[1]

Of much practical account in her dealings with foreign courts was her ability to address the ambassadors either in their own language or in Latin. Her accent in French and Italian was not indeed beyond criticism, being harsh and unmusical, but her fluency was unquestioned

If the Court of Katherine Parr had reflected the austere spirit of her times, the Court of Elizabeth gave back some reflection of the queen's intellectual tastes. William Harrison, in his vivid description of her entourage between 1577 and 1587, distinguishes two groups among her gentlewomen.[2] There were the 'ancient ladies of the court', women perhaps five to ten years older than the queen herself, much occupied in needlework, 'caulwork, or silk-spinning, continually reading the Scriptures, or the history

[1] Ballard, loc. cit., p. 219.

[2] William Harrison, *Elizabethan England*, Camelot Series, ed. by Lothrop Withrington, pp. 218–19.

of England and the surrounding nations, writing books of their own or translating other men's works into English or Latin. Among these no doubt were Anna Cooke who had become Lady Bacon, and her sister Mildred, Lord Burghley's second wife, who was constantly about the queen and was considered by some to be as good a politician as her husband.[1] These elder ladies were also skilful in surgery and distillation of waters, 'admirable housewives and cooks'. The younger women gave their free time, when not attending on the queen or their mistresses, to music and the practice of lute and cithern and of prick-song. Young and old alike, or many of their number, besides 'sound knowledge of Greek and Latin, were no less skilful in Spanish, Italian, and French', and were scarcely excelled even by the noblemen and gentlemen who had studied in foreign parts.

Harrison's description indeed suggests the change that, with a greater settlement of religion and a less painful absorption in controversy, was coming over the educated classes of England. Elizabeth, bred up in an earlier epoch, read the classics to the end of her days and her example carried great weight. But speaking generally, the Renaissance study of Greek had been severely checked by the impoverishment of schools and colleges, the dispersion of libraries, and the exile, during Mary's reign, of many scholars and learned ecclesiastics. It is not surprising that among the daughters of the nobility the fashion of ancient learning should gradually languish and give place to other pre-occupations. Not that it died out entirely, either in this or the succeeding century. Mulcaster, writing about 1570, suggests that it was fairly general in good English families, indeed a custom of the country. 'We know [young maidens] learn the best and finest of our learned languages to the admiration of all men . . . these things our country doth stand to.'[2] That omnivorous student Elizabeth Tanfield, Lady Falkland, born 1585, taught

[1] Carte, *History of England*, vol. iii, p. 670.
[2] Mulcaster, loc. cit., p. 51.

herself Latin and Hebrew. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, about 1596, Lucentio, the pretended tutor of Baptista's daughter, 'a young scholar that hath been long studying at Rheims', is commended for the post as being 'cunning in Greek, Latin, and other languages'.[1]

There is little evidence that Elizabeth took a personal interest in the young girls for whom, as her wards, she had a certain measure of responsibility, beyond occasionally arranging an advantageous marriage. In 1561 Sir William Cecil was made Master of the Queen's Wards, and received from Sir Nicholas Bacon suggestions for improving the training of the heirs male, from whose lands, during their minority, a handsome sum found its way into the royal exchequer.[2] There is no trace of any such arrangements for the upbringing of the queen's girl-wards. Their custody and marriage were usually a matter of barter, and they received a good or a meagre education according to the capacity of their guardians. Among numerous accounts for boy-wards preserved in the State Papers is a solitary bill for 18*s.* 5*d.* due to Robert Rowbotham for the 'exhibition' of Margaret, daughter and heir of Richard Grace, goldsmith of London, and Her Majesty's ward at 6½*d.* a day from Michaelmas to the 2nd November 1569, when she came of age. The queen's share for rent of Margaret's lands over the same period was 33*s.* 9¼*d.*[3]

By the time that Ascham wrote his *Scholemaster*, after Elizabeth had been ten years on the throne, two changes had occurred; the flood-gates of poetry had opened and the fashionable world had become italianate. Englishwomen, despite their new scholarship, made no such response to the creative impulse as they had made to the quickened impulse of religion; yet they played to the full their part of inspiration, and even of interpretation, lending their voices and instruments to the service of song and their young grace and beauty to the rendering of masque and entertainment.

[1] Act. II, Sc. i.
[2] Cf. *Archaeologia*, vol. xxxvi, p. 343.
[3] *Cal. Dom. S.P., Eliz., Addenda*, 1566–79, vol. xix, 28.

There were indeed a few literary attempts of a character less severe than the theological treatises of an earlier generation. Mary, Countess of Pembroke, Sidney's sister for whom his Arcadia was composed, translated not only Philip Morney's *Discourse of Life and Death*, but also five years later, *The Tragedie of Antonie*.[1] The learned Elizabeth Tanfield, Lady Falkland, made many translations and wrote much fragmentary verse, including a *Life of Tamberlaine*; most of it she destroyed, but her *Tragedie of Mariam, the Faire Queene of Jewry*, based upon Lodge's *Josephus*, and written in her girlhood, about 1604, may be studied in a recent reprint.[2] This was her second dramatic attempt; an earlier play dedicated to her husband, the scene of which was laid in Syracuse, has disappeared. These girlish efforts excited the interest of John Davies of Hereford, who addressed to her his *Muses' Sacrifice, or Divine Meditations*, printed 1612, coupling with her name those of Lucy, Countess of Bedford, and Mary, Countess of Pembroke, all whose works had hitherto remained unprinted:

> But you Three Graces (whom our Muse would grace
> Had she that glory that our Philip had
> That was the Beautie of Arts Soule and Face)
> You presse the Presse with little you have made,
> No—you well know the Presse so much is wrong'd
> By abiect Rimers that great Hearts doe scorne
> To have their Measures with such Nombers throng'd
> As are so basely got, conceiv'd and borne.

Lady Falkland, possessing no charm but that of sincerity, earned the homage of yet another poet; when she was thirteen Michael Drayton dedicated to her his *William de la Pole*, in *England's Heroical Epistles*. 'Sweet is the French tongue,' the words run, 'more sweet the Italian; but most sweet are they both if spoken by your admired selfe,' and again, 'by how much the more your tender

[1] Ballard, loc. cit., p. 262.

[2] *The Tragedie of Mariam, The Faire Queene of Jewry*. Written by E. C. Malone Society Reprints, 1907.

yeares give scarcely warrant for your more than woman-like wisedome, by so much is your iudgement and reading the more to be wondered at.'[1]

Here and there, in place of learned theologians the poets themselves turned tutor to the daughters of their patrons. Samuel Daniel instructed the Lady Anne Clifford, Countess of Dorset, though like her mother before her she learnt no language but her own, 'because her father would not permit of it';[2] a greater poet, Dr. Donne, made an aphorism in her honour when he said of her that she 'well knew how to converse of all things from predestination to slea-silk'.[3]

The custom of sending young men to complete their education in Italy, which Ascham and Cheke strongly deprecated as a threat to English morals, did not, of course, extend to women. Even Ascham's prejudice was not, however, proof against an Italian book, the *Cortegiano* of Count Baldassare Castiglione, which appeared in Sir Thomas Hoby's translation in 1561.[4] The work took fashionable society by storm, and Castiglione's Courtier, which had in real life a prototype in Sir Philip Sidney, became the model for the ideal Cavalier of the succeeding generation. Castiglione's portrait of the perfect gentlewoman no less was universally admired and imitated, with the result that a new accomplishment and charm overshadowed in courtly circles the severer characteristics of the Reformation era, and the study of Greek and Latin in some measure yielded to the cult of the Italian tongue. The new paragon was 'a sight in letters, in musike, in drawinge or peinctinge, and skilfull in daunsinge and in divising sportes and pastimes'.[5] In many respects

[1] Chalmers, *English Poets*, vol. iv, Addenda, p. xvii. Æmilia Lanyer's poem, '*Salve Deus Rex Judæorum*,' a title she had dreamed, although dedicated to Anne of Denmark and the child Princess Elizabeth (1611), belongs to the inspiration of the earlier reign; the authoress describes how she had enjoyed in her youth the favour of 'great Elizae'.

[2] *Lives of Lady Anne Clifford, Countess of Dorset*, Roxburghe Club, 1916, p. 20.

[3] Ballard, loc. cit., p. 308.

[4] *Scholemaster*, loc. cit., p. 240.

[5] Castiglione, *Book of the Courtier*, trans. Hoby, 1561. Tudor Translations, xxiii (Nutt, London, 1900), pp. 220–1.

she revived the old chivalric ideal of manners. 'In daunsynge I would not see her use too swift and violent trickes nor yet in singing or playinge upon instrumentes those harde and often divisions [variations] that declare more counninge than sweetness.' If she dances or plays she 'ought to be brought to it with suffring herself somewhat to be prayed and with a certain basfulnes that may declare the noble shamefastnes that is contrarye to headinesse'. The ideal lady possesses many fine characteristics, staidness, courage, temperance, strength of mind, wisdom, virtues which a man might be apt to think it not a woman's part to entertain. In embryo the two types, the Puritan and the Cavalier ladies, who were to hold sway in English homes during the seventeenth century, had thus already come into being before the close of the Elizabethan age.

6. *Educational Opinion*

Throughout the sixteenth century, whether in England or France, writers on education and on school-keeping were numerous. Many of them, and these not only Englishmen, make passing reference to Sir Thomas More's household, and express their admiration of his daughters' accomplishment. At the same time the writers who subject the education of girls to the same searching inquiry as boys' education or even notice it at all, are comparatively very few. In spite of brilliant examples of female erudition in the leading European countries there was no general consensus of opinion that could rapidly affect the traditional educational practice. The conspiracy of silence was indeed broken in the republic of letters by Vives and Erasmus, and somewhat later by writers of the second rank, like Bouchet and Henri-Corneille Agrippa in France, and in England more particularly by Thomas Becon and Richard Mulcaster. The opinions of Vives, Erasmus, and Becon have been discussed elsewhere. Jean Bouchet holds with conviction the medieval position; instruction for women

is not a question of ability, or of right living, but only of poverty and wealth, of royal or humble estate.

'Je suis bien d'opinion,' he explains, 'que les femmes de bas estat et qui sont contrainctes vacquer aux choses familières et domestiques ne doivent vacquer aux lettres, *parce que c'est chose répugnante à rusticité*; mais les roynes, princesses et aultres dames qui ne se doibvent, pour la révérence de leur estat, appliquer à mesnages . . . et qui ont serviteurs et servantes pour ce faire, doivent trop mieulx appliquer leurs esprits et emploier le temps à vacquer à bonnes et honnestes lettres, . . . que à oysiveté, mère de tous vices, ou à dances, convis et banquets.'[1]

Opinions such as these, at least so crudely expressed, had been in England at this date to a great extent outgrown; the advocates of feminine progress were on the whole wider-minded; the new leaven was at work. Coarse and abusive attacks like the *Schole house of Women* met with such response as Edward More's *Lytle and bryefe treatyse called the Defence of Women*, written, in a chivalrous spirit and a doggrel rhyme, by a student on holiday in London.[2] Boevey's *Treatise on Education* urges a father's duty of 'chiefly providing for the welfare and improvement of his Sonnes Education before that of a Daughter',[3] but on the other hand, at the opening of Elizabeth's reign William Bercher is at pains to add to his *Nobylyte off Wymen* an appreciative account of the learned gentlewomen of his day and to express disapproval of the narrow training ordinarily provided.[4]

Apart from the literary expression of a time-worn academic dispute, the facts of daily life were somewhat disturbing the old conclusions, and there is evidence that the new attention to intellectual claims was affecting family relationships. It is not a mere accident that one meets at this time, in various directions, a strong resentment of idiosyncrasy or independence of character in the younger women

[1] Rousselot, loc. cit., vol. i, pp. 108–9.

[2] Edward More, *A Lytle and bryefe treatyse called the Defence of Women*, 1560.

[3] Boevey, *Treatise on Education*, Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. 28531.

[4] W. Bercher, *The Nobylyte off Wymen*, 1559, Roxburghe Club, 1904, ed. R. Warwick Bond, Part I, pp. 152 et seq.

such as was bound to develop in the wake of a greater independence of thought. The old parental autocracy especially in questions of marriage was less readily enforced. Peremptory injunctions appear in contemporary wills, such as that of Michael Wentworth in 1558: 'Item if any of my daughters [five in number] will not be advised by my executours but of their awne fantastical brayne bestowe themselves lightly upon a light personne thenne I will that daughter to have but one hundred marcs.'[1] Lady Carey, again, was completely nonplussed by her daughter-in-law, the brilliant and eccentric Elizabeth Tanfield; 'being one that loved much to be humoured and finding her not to apply herself to it, [she] used her very hardly, so far as at last to confine her to her chamber; which seeing she little cared for but entertained herself with reading, Lady Carey took away all her books, with command to have no more brought her. Then she set herself to make verses . . .'

It is this aspect of the spirit of the age which Shakespeare has seized in *The Taming of the Shrew*, depicting in Baptista, a parent ready to be generous in the matter of his daughters' education, especially towards the gentle, compliant Bianca, who has artistic tastes:

> She taketh most delight
> In musick, instruments, and poetry,
> Schoolmasters will I keep within my house
> Fit to instruct her youth . . .
> . . . to cunning men
> I will be very kind, and liberal
> To mine own children in good bringing up.[2]

Baptista can, however, make nothing of the noble-hearted shrew Katharine, at war with herself and all the world, and thankfully hands her over to Petruchio, who, admiring her vigour of character, sets to work to break her into a wifely submission.

By far the most valuable contemporary comments on education are contained in the writings of Richard Mulcaster, a schoolmaster who had apparently had practical

[1] *North Country Wills*, Surtees Soc., vol. 116, p. 246. [2] Act I, Sc. i.

experience in giving girls their first elementary instruction. In his view, and at the time he writes, about 1561, the English practice in girls' education is well defined and has been justified by results: a forward step has clearly been taken since Becon lamented the disappearance of the nunnery school and the absence of any substitute. Girls are usually taught to read and write, to sing and play; they study ancient and modern languages, and their parents are willing to provide the means in the hope of their being more advantageously married by reason of these accomplishments. Mulcaster does not, however, rest there: a young girl's right to receive education is not merely a question of pecuniary loss or gain; it has a fourfold aspect; the custom of the country permits it; conscience forbids her being left in want of it; her aptness to learn is God-given; and finally excellent results have followed a good upbringing. 'Myself,' he concludes, 'am for them tooth and nail.' Yet though a convinced, he is not an indiscriminate champion, but indeed a little afraid of the paragon and the enthusiastic admiration she arouses. A girl's education in its scope and character ought definitely to be conditioned by her life-circumstances.

> 'If a young maiden is to be brought up with a view to marriage, obedience to authority and similar qualities must form the best kind of training; if from necessity she has to learn how to earn her own living some technical training must prepare her for a definite calling; if she is to adorn some high position she must acquire suitable accomplishments; if she is destined for government which may be offered to her by men and is not denied her by God, the greatness of the position calls for general excellence and a variety of gifts.'

The principle of shaping education to particular social functions applied in Mulcaster's opinion as much to men as women; the idea belonged indeed to the growing sense of public obligation, of 'civil and domestic duty', which characterized the Elizabethan age; in the case of women their functions were limited, and their education should be accordingly less general and more intensive.

Mulcaster had devoted some attention to the comparative educational capacity of boys and girls; he had observed that girls were quick-witted, over eager to express themselves, and more easily tired by mental exertion, while their physical health needed careful supervision. He had come to the conclusion that elementary education is essential for all girls, but general principles should not be based upon 'rare excellences' and 'shining examples', although they are of value to prove that women can learn when they give their minds to it. Reading, writing, music, sight-singing, skill in needlework and housewifery, are the fundamentals, and indeed comprise all the subjects that should 'universally be taught to girls'. Where rank or outstanding ability demand more advanced studies either the fundamentals may be carried to a higher degree of excellence, or skill in languages may be added, possibly also drawing, 'to beautify their needlework'. Women have little aptitude for geometry or mathematics; they are not suited to be lawyers, physicians, or preachers; they have no leisure for philosophy.

'Is not a young gentlewoman', he sums up, 'thoroughly well equipped who can read distinctly, write neatly and swiftly, sing sweetly and play and draw well, understand and speak the learned languages, as well as the modern tongues approved by her time and country, and who has some knowledge of logic and rhetoric besides the information acquired in her study of foreign languages? If in addition to all this she be an honest woman and a good housewife would she not be worth wishing for and worth enshrining?'

It is indeed no unworthy ideal. Mulcaster's sense of the claim of young girls upon the consideration and protection of society is the most chivalrous possible. If, in one sense, he sums up the best Renaissance opinion on a much-vexed question, in his breadth of view, his anxiety to make a reasonable and not an excessive demand on the average woman, while yet calling out her best powers, in his ability to visualize the needs of the wage-earner as well as the princess, he has advanced far beyond the pioneers of the opening century.

X

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOARDING-SCHOOL
PART I

1. *Thomas Becon the Reformer*

AFTER the Dissolution, the disappearance of the nunneries as places where girls could 'get learning' began to make itself felt. There is indeed some evidence that even at the time when their destruction was imminent, the loss involved was realized and former beneficiaries made fruitless protests. Henry VIII's commissioners appealed to Cromwell on behalf of Polesworth Nunnery (1537), where at one time some thirty to forty gentlemen's children were 'right vertuously brought up'.[1] At Godstow, although the records of the past, especially in the first half of the fifteenth century, were by no means untarnished, the same witnesses reported that 'most of the gentlewomen of the county were sent there to be bred, so that the gentry of the country desired the King would spare the house'.[2] In Yorkshire, where the hope of restoring the old institutions of religion led to open rebellion, Robert Aske, leader of the Pilgrimage of Grace, enumerated among other benefits conferred on the gentry by the monastic houses, the 'bringing up in virtue' of their daughters.[3] If some allowance for special pleading has to be made, alike for the Commissioners engaged in an unpopular task and for a leader vainly endeavouring to turn back the tide, no such limitation is required in the case of Thomas Becon, the Reformer, persecuted and exiled for his religious views. It is remarkable that from his pen there should proceed the highest commendation of nunnery schools and the most genuine, reasoned expression of regret at their removal.

[1] Power, p. 579, quoted from Dugdale, *Mon.*, vol. ii, p. 363.
[2] *V.C.H. Oxon.*, vol. ii, p. 74.
[3] *Camb. Mod. Hist.*, vol. ii, p. 468.

'To this end,' he says [bringing up young maids], 'without doubt at the beginning were the monasteries of solitary women . . . called nuns, built and set up and endowed with possessions of our godly ancestors. . . . The young maids were not enforced to wear this or that apparel; to abstain from this or that kind of meats; to sing this or that service; to say so many prayers; to shave their heads; to vow chastity; and for ever to abide in their cloister unto their dying day. . . . For all that they were commanded to do of their school-mistresses and governesses was nothing else than the doctrine of the gospel, and matters appertaining unto honest and civil manners; whom they most willingly obeyed. . . . And would God there were some consideration of this matter had among the rulers of the Christian commonweal, that the young maids might be godly brought up.'[1]

Becon wrote his *Catechism* in the reign of Edward VI, when the nunnery school was indeed a thing of the past, but the memory of it still lingered with many who had been the nuns' pupils; from them he may well have gleaned his favourable impression of the sanctified good sense with which on the whole the schools were conducted, the absence of fanaticism or the forcing of young consciences, above all the impeccable ambition to instil into the scholars a knowledge of religion and the code of manners.

If Becon's testimony is to all intents and purposes that of a contemporary, the same cannot be said of Thomas Fuller, after an interval of a century, and John Aubrey, about fifty years later, who place upon record a fast-fading tradition. At the same time there is little that is intrinsically improbable about their statements, and Aubrey records a fact not otherwise preserved, that one at least of the Wiltshire nunneries, Kington St. Mary, took in pupils. Fuller, at a time when the post-Dissolution experiments in school-keeping were being widely criticized, wrote of the nunneries as 'good Shee-schools, where girls and maids of the neighbourhood were taught to read and work, and sometimes a little Latine was taught them

[1] Becon, *Catechism* (*Works*, Parker Society, vol. ii, 377).

therein. Yea,' he adds, 'give me leave to say, if such Feminine Foundations had still continued . . . haply the weaker sex (besides the avoiding modern inconveniences) might be heightened to a higher perfection than hitherto hath been obtained.'[1]

Modern educational research has tended to show how insufficiently the foundations of Edward VI and Elizabeth supplied the place of the vanished pre-Reformation schools, and of the chantries which had maintained for the national advantage many priestly schoolmasters. The loss for girls may have been less because the provision had always been more scanty and educational practice had followed different lines; but the restitution was pitiably inadequate and long delayed.

Becon first put into words a suggestion that the establishment of girls' schools, comparable to but not identical with grammar schools for boys, would be of great national advantage.

'It is expedient', he writes, 'that by public authority schools for women-children be erected and set up in every Christian commonweal, and honest, sage, wise, discreet, sober, grave, and learned matrons made rulers and mistresses of the same, and that honest and liberal stipends be appointed for the said school-mistresses which shall travail in the bringing up of young maids, that by this means they may be occasioned the more gladly and willingly to take pains. . . . If it be thought convenient, as it is most convenient, that schools should be erected and set up for the right education and bringing up of the youth of the male kind, why should it not also be thought convenient that schools be built for the godly institution and virtuous bringing up of the youth of the female kind? Is not the woman the creature of God so well as the man? And as dear unto God as the man? Is not the woman a necessary member of the commonweal? . . .verily, . . . they do no less deserve well of the Christian commonweal that found and stablish schools with honest stipends for the education and bringing-up of the women-children in godliness and virtue than they which erect and set up schools for the institution of the men-children in good letters and godly manners.'[2]

[1] Fuller, *Church Hist. of Britain*, ed. Brewer, vol. iii, p. 336.

[2] Becon, loc. cit., pp. 370 and 377.

Becon's plea for women's education is based on the same arguments employed by More, Vives, and Erasmus—namely, the advantage to society, as to the family, of a Christian upbringing alike for boys and girls; in urging the foundation of public schools, however, he shows a wider vision. More's School of the Family, directed by scholars of outstanding ability, was only capable of imitation by people of means and good social position; it was not suited to the average citizen; it tended also to produce paragons rather than to raise the general average of female attainment. Becon intended educational facilities to be available for 'woman-kind'; he envisaged group-education rather than individual culture. Yet, striking as his conception was, it appears to have awakened very little, if any, immediate response. Large numbers of grammar schools for boys continued to spring up on old or new foundations; systematic provision for girls still tarried. The prejudice in favour of home teaching was strongly rooted, although there was no aversion from the giving of this teaching in another home than the girls' own. Yet changes there were, greatly accelerated, after the accession of Queen Elizabeth, by the influx into England of foreign teachers taking refuge within her hospitable dominions from religious persecution in France, the Netherlands, Spain, and Italy.

2. *The Refugees and Early Girls' Schools*

The general attitude of reformers towards women's education was sympathetic. The contribution which the refugees made to the problem was not, however, conditioned only by matters of religious opinion, but also by practical necessity. The circumstances of their exile, while on the one hand they accentuated the importance of bringing up the younger generation in full knowledge of truths for which their parents had thought no sacrifice too dear, on the other hand weakened the facilities for household education which girls especially had hitherto

enjoyed. Some substitute had to be found, and the most obvious was the provision of schools where children, often of necessity separated from, even deprived of, their parents, could be gathered together, or to which those absorbed in arduous toil to provide the means of livelihood could send their sons and daughters for instruction. Traces of such schools are not wanting among the Strangers' Records towards the beginning of Elizabeth's reign or even earlier.

An early arrival about 1551, was Mrs. Ellen Apprando, a Dutchwoman from Milan, married to an Englishman named William Matrevys.[1] Twenty years later she was earning her living by keeping school in St. Mary Abchurch. An edict of the 24th May 1567, issued by Margaret, Duchess of Parma, Regent of the Low Countries, and specially directed against schoolmasters who should teach any error or false doctrine, drove many Dutch and French teachers to this country.[2] Anness Deger, a native of Tournay, came to England about 1568 and in 1618 was still practising the 'trade' of a French schoolmistress in Tenter Alley, Southwark.[3] Marry Lemaire, born in Antwerp, had a school in Glean Alley, also in Southwark, in 1578, which she kept for over forty years.[4] William Mighon, a Dutchman, and Moykyn his wife, living in the parish of St. Dionys Backchurch, were teaching children in 1568,[5] and a goodwife Frances, schoolmistress in Popinjay Alley, is entered in St. Bride's records of 1598 and 1599.[6] In 1571 Elys Demericke, a Dutchman who earned his living 'by servinge as a gentilman's clarke and by teaching of children' had in his house, in St. Andrew's Holborn, a young girl of the age of twelve, his countrywoman, as an apprentice, presumably in the art of teaching.[7]

1 Hug. Soc., vol. x, Part II, *Returns of Aliens*, p. 83,
2 Ib., vol. viii, *Denizations and Naturalizations*, Introduction, p. xlix.
3 Ib., Part III, *Returns of Aliens*, p. 225.
4 Ib., Part III, p. 224.
5 Ib., Part III, p. 347.
6 Ib., Part III, p. 62.
7 Ib., Part II, p. 10.

It seems not improbable that the teaching of some industry played a part in these little schools. The one kept in Bermondsey Street in 1568 by Mary Stochovens is specifically called 'a semster's schole'.[1] In certain centres of strangers, in the south and east of England, the teaching of industry to girls in school was largely carried on, and the townsfolk were not slow to take advantage of it for their own daughters. Upon Elizabeth's visit to Sandwich in 1573 (when she received a presentation in the schoolhouse garden which she acknowledged with a short speech in Latin), the queen and her company were gratified to observe sitting on the new-turfed garden wall and on a scaffold erected for the occasion against the school building, some eighty to a hundred girls, English and Dutch, all spinning fine bay yarn.[2] One of the scenes in the Artizan-Strangers' pageant at Norwich in 1578 consisted of 'the portraiture of a matron and two or three children, and over her head was written these words, Good nurture changeth qualities; on the stage there stoode at the one ende eyght small women-chyldren spinnyng worsted yarne and at the other ende as many knittyng of worsted yarne hose'.[3]

In one case the description suggests an establishment not unlike a boarding school, for children of both sexes, probably of better social position. The Returns of Aliens in the Parish of St. Ethelburga show that in 1571 John Sterling, schoolmaster, and Christian, his wife, had at board with them twelve Dutch children, five boys, John Nielant, Bawden Bogarert, Daniell Godfrey, Jerom Mewes van Hilles, and Levant Dekendre, and seven girls, Katheryne Henricke, Katheryne Derick, Katheryne Leemans, Debera Demattes, Annes Demos, Marye Dekendre, and Marye de Jacobbe.[4] A dramatic parallel for this co-educational school is to be found in the 'charge-house on the top of the hill', in which Holofernes, the schoolmaster in *Love's Labour's Lost*, 'educates youth'. 'I praise

[1] Ib., Part III, p. 412.
[2] Nichols's *Progresses* (1823), vol. i, p. 339.
[3] Ib., vol. ii, p. 143.
[4] Hug. Soc., vol. x, Part I, *Returns of Aliens*, p. 431.

the Lord for you,' says Master Parson Nathaniel to him, 'and so may my parishioners, for their sons are well tutored by you and their daughters profit very greatly under you.'[1] To these examples of schools run by alien refugees, and primarily intended for their daughters, it is possible to add some few indications of school provision for English girls during the sixteenth century. Mulcaster writing in 1581 speaks of the first elementary training of boys in which 'young maidens ordinary share.'[2]

The statutes of Banbury Grammar School (1594) ordered the admission of a certain number of girls but none were to remain 'above the age of nine nor longer than they may learn to read English'. The provision in the Harrow Rules (1590) that 'no girls shall be received to be taught in the school' would have been unnecessary if there was no likelihood of girls applying for admission.[3] A similar caveat in the Founder's Rules for Thomas Saunders' School at Uffington (1637) is much more explicit. 'Whereas it is the most *common and usual course* for many to send their daughters to common schools to be taught together with and amongst all sorts of youths, which course is by many conceived very uncomely and not decent, therefore the said schoolmaster may not admit any of that sex to be taught in the said school.'[4]

Besides the girl-scholars of Holofernes, more than one of Shakespeare's heroines went to school. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1593) Helena, recalling her girlish memories, says to Hermia:

> . . . O, and is all forgot?
> All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?
> We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,

[1] The *Oxford English Dictionary* explains the unusual word 'charge-house' as a place for the charge of children, a boarding school. A residential school would hardly seem necessary in a country parish; it is tempting to see here a reference to some such establishment as that of John Sterling, to which local residents were allowed to send their boys and girls day by day.

[2] Oliphant, *Educational Writings of Richard Mulcaster*, p. 51.

[3] Foster Watson, *The Old Grammar Schools*, p. 116.

[4] *Pages from a Private Diary* (1899), p. 47.

> Have with our neelds created both one flower,
> Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
> Both warbling of one song, both in one key . . .[1]

And in the sombre *Measure for Measure* (1603) Isabella explains that the cousinship of Juliet and herself is but

> Adoptedly; as school-maids change their names
> By vain though apt affection . . .[2]

3. *The Foundation of Christ's Hospital*

The earliest example after the Dissolution of a boarding school where girls of different families were assembled under one roof for purposes of education, housed and fed, would seem to be the charitable foundation of Christ's Hospital. Stow dates 'the preparing of the Grey Friars' house in London for poore fatherless children' from the 26th July 1552, and the 'ordaining of the Schoole' in 1553.[3] The scheme was evolved, at the order of Edward VI, by the Mayor, Ridley, Bishop of London, and Aldermen and Commoners to the number of twenty-three.[4] They recommended that the house of the Grey Friars should become a hospital for 'fatherless children and other poore men's children', who should there find meat, drink, clothes, lodging, and learning, and suitable attendance. Both sexes were to benefit, the 'mayden children' having their own matron, Agnes Sexton, 'whose yerely fee was, besyde a liverye and 18*d.* a weke for her boorde, £3 6*s.* 8*d.*',[5] and a country settlement at Hoddesdon. In the London house, before the Great Fire, the girls were lodged on the north side of the Garden Plot, close to the 'Ducke Yard'; after the Fire, in buildings erected by Sir Robert Clayton over the 'Giffs' or southern cloister, a site which the lesser dorter of the Franciscans had once occupied.[6] Girls and boys alike soon became familiar figures at pageant and funeral and sermonizing in the City of London. The diarist

[1] *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act III, Scene ii.
[2] *Measure for Measure*, Act I, Scene v.
[3] E. H. Pearce, *Annals of Christ's Hospital* (1908), p. 12.
[4] Ib., p. 16. [5] Ib., p. 24. [6] Ib., p. 168.

Machyn describes on more than one occasion, with the kindly, proprietary interest of a citizen, the appearance of the four hundred 'men and vomen chylderyn, alle in blue cotes, and wenssys [wenches] in blue frokes, and with skoychons in-brodered on ther slevys with the armes of London and red capes'.[1]

The girls for the first century and a half had their meals in Hall with the male scholars, and for certain lessons shared the same schoolroom. Dr. Pearce quotes an order of 1710 which lays down that 'the girles shall noe longer goe to the Writing School to learn to write but that some conveniency shall be made in their own school for their writing, and that the Writing Master shall send his serv[t] [i.e., apprentice] to instruct them at such house as shall be convenient'.

4. *The Woman Teacher*

A word must here be said on the important question of the supply of teachers to meet the growing demand for girls' education. Throughout this study the scarcity of any reference to women teachers has been noticeable; generally speaking the reason is plain; for the standard type of education in the home, women experienced in domestic and social life, the mother, the duenna, were the obvious instructresses; book-learning was the man's province, a subject for the man, especially the cleric, to impart alike to boys and girls. When nunnery schools disappeared, with them disappeared also a certain number of potential teachers, women of comparative leisure and attainments superior to the average, especially in the all-important direction of religious knowledge. Becon was not slow to seize upon this weakness in post-reformation conditions and to cast about for a remedy. There were certain obvious advantages in setting women rather than men to teach younger women—but who were available? 'It is lawful for old and ancient matrons to teach,' he

[1] *Diary of Henry Machyn* (Camd. Soc., 1847), p. 33.

says in the *Catechism*; adding with contemptuous bitterness, 'I looked that thou shouldest have said unto me that the ancient matrons should teach the young women trimly to dance, minionly to play upon the lute or virginals, cunningly to work with the needle, finely to apparel themselves, handsomely to play the serving-maids, pleasantly to entertain strangers, younkers and gentlemen'.[1] The type of schoolmistresses he desired was something very different and the provision of an adequate stipend was a *sine qua non*. Any attempt to systematize the teaching of girls was bound, in the long run, to produce a better standard of teaching; but the process was a slow one; for a long time to come erudition is found to be the last thing required of a schoolmistress. In the meantime, the field was open. Women began to look to teaching not at first because they were qualified to teach but in order to earn their bread honestly.[2] 'The bearer, Master Hands, wished me to Gloucester,' wrote the widowed and poverty-stricken Margaret Partridge to her father in 1579, 'to teach children to sew and the book with the virginals.'[3] There were women among the teachers of the art of calligraphy who abounded in London. Elizabeth Lucar had apparently learnt at a dame's school to write 'three manner hands'.[4] A gentleman usher at Elizabeth's Court compared the queen to 'some gentle mistress of children, whoe, when they gyde the hands of their schollers with their owne handes and thereby doe make them to wryte faire letters, doe yet to encourage them give them as much praise as if themselves had done it without direction'.[5]

The existence of a number of unattached women teachers began to attract the attention of the authorities.

[1] Becon, loc. cit., p. 376.

[2] The practice was not confined to women: in 1619 a correspondent wrote a begging letter to Secretary Calvert, explaining that he had lost his property and was 'reduced to teaching little children'; and in 1561 the Corporation of the City of London permitted John Morgan, Gent., for 'pitty and charities sake' and in relief of his great poverty, to set up a writing school, keeping always a lattice before his shop-window.

[3] *Cal. Dom. S.P. Eliz., Addenda*, 1566–79, p. 562.

[4] Ballard, loc. cit., p. 37.

[5] Nichols's *Progresses*, vol. iii, p. 79.

The licensing of schoolmasters, clerical and lay, by the Church was an immemorial custom, but hitherto it has been impossible to discover that, in England, any official supervision was exercised over the schoolmistress, a proof in itself of the insignificant numbers and the subordinate position of those who held the office. In an age of religious unsettlement, however, the due control of all who have influence with growing boys and girls becomes increasingly important. A series of ecclesiastical documents, beginning with the articles sent by Queen Mary in March 1554 to the Bishop of London, illustrates the care which was now being taken to remove from office 'all schoolmasters and teachers of children' suspected of the particular heresy of the moment.[1]

'In matters of religion', says Professor de Montmorency, 'the schoolmaster was allowed no license. By statute 5 Eliz. *c* 1. s. 4 (1562–3) the Oath of Supremacy . . . was administered to all schoolmasters and public and private teachers of children.'[2] Eight years earlier (1554) Bishop Bonner's Articles for the London Diocese specifically included women teachers in their purview; they are 'Articles concerning Schoolmasters, and Teachers of Children, Men or Women.' Inquiry is to be made

'Whether they that take upon them to teach children, whether it be English or Latin, to sing or play or such-like, be themselves sober and discreet. . . . Whether any teacher or schoolmaster do teach or read to their scholars any evil or naughty corrupt book, ballad or writing, or do interpret or set forth unto any of them the New Testament in English or Latin or any other books, English or Latin, concerning Scripture, not expedient for young children to meddle withal.'[3]

There is no difficulty in understanding the bearing of the last clause. The keen interest women showed in questions of religious reform, and especially their readiness to make a pastoral use of the new and powerful instrument which

[1] W. H. Frere, *Visitation Articles and Injunctions* (1910), p. 322.
[2] De Montmorency, *State Intervention in English Education*, p. 68.
[3] Frere, loc. cit., vol. ii, p. 355, arts. 106, 112.

the Scriptures in the vernacular, aided by the printing-press, had placed within their reach, was fully recognized. A further specific reason for the supervision of women teachers was the growing number of refugees for religion who were opening small schools, holding classes in languages, music, and handicraft, or even entering private families as governesses, all over the country.

Official notices, such as Bishop Bonner's, still do not appear to have carried with them any formal licensing of the schoolmistress. Evidence on the point is scanty and contradictory. It is probably a curious accident only that the Master Hands who invited Margaret Partridge into his neighbourhood to keep school was registrar of Gloucester with whom the licensing of teachers would have rested. Women teachers were often looked upon as interlopers by those who held official credentials. In 1639 William Watts, licensed schoolmaster at St. Nicholas-at-Wade in the Isle of Thanet, complained at the Archdeacon's Visitation that one Mistress Foster, 'wife of Thomas Foster of Chislet, whose house bordereth upon the skirt of the parish of St. Nicholas aforesaid, doth teach school, namely to write and read, to the prejudice of me and my license, in regard that all or most of her scholars are of the parish of St. Nicholas; wherefore I humbly desire that she may be inhibited from teaching'.[1]

Some years earlier (1617), in the same district, Henry Mountstephen, curate of Monkton, had been presented for teaching without leave, and (the injunction adds), 'there is also one the wife of Henry Mountstephen who doth teach school there, likewise without license,' a phrase which might imply that she could have obtained a license had she chosen to make application.[2] At Reculver in 1619 the wife of James Peircey, an unlicensed schoolmaster, 'by the minister's consent taught two or three children their hornbooks'.[3]

[1] *Arch. Cant.*, vol. xxv, *Visitations of the Archd. of Canterbury*, p. 25. There is of course a manifest unfairness in 'inhibiting' a teacher whose sex precluded her from obtaining a license, but none if she had merely failed to apply for one.

[2] Ib., p. 36. [3] Ib., p. 49.

XI

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOARDING-SCHOOL
PART II

1. *Girls' Public Schools in the Seventeenth Century*

THE arrival of strangers, religious refugees of various nationalities, had an important bearing on the question of girls' education in school. The existence of a supply of capable teachers, interested in girls as well as boys and prepared to give lessons in those very subjects, music, vocal, and instrumental, the French and Italian tongues, as well as various sorts of handicraft, which were universally recognized as suitable, determined to a large extent the character of the early girls' boarding-schools. All that was now required of a headmistress was matronly supervision of health, dress, and good manners; scholarship was afforded by the visiting master and especially by the foreign professor.

An ampler provision of better-class girls' schools was undoubtedly hastened by the ecclesiastical position. The replacement of the nunnery school by protestant institutions had in fact become an urgent necessity. The interest of women in religious matters was widespread but by no means in all cases exercised on the side of the reformers. Many worked zealously to restore the old order. From Yorkshire it was reported in 1592 that 'the gentlemen thereabouts had fallen off from the priests but the gentlewomen stood steadfastly to them'.[1] James I charged his judges to beware especially of 'women who are the nourishers of papistry';[2] preachers inveighed constantly against their 'insolence and impudence',[3] and players and ballad-singers took them to task.

Those who still hoped for a reversion to papal domination proclaimed their intention of re-erecting in England

[1] *Cal. Dom. S.P. Eliz.*, vol. ccxlii, 122.
[2] *Cal. Dom. S.P. James I*, vol. cv, 104 (1619).
[3] Ib., vol. cxii, 82.

monasteries especially for women, and in the meantime opportunities were made abroad for girls who desired to enter religion. Houses were established in France and Belgium, at St. Omer, Douay, Louvain, Gravelines. At Brussels a nunnery was set up by sixteen Englishwomen, with the assistance of endowments contributed by the Archduke. The new abbess was a daughter of Sir John Berkeley, and at the inception, the Lady Mary Percy, Mrs. Dorothy Arundel, and six other English ladies of good family took the habit.[1]

A schedule compiled in 1615 shows that the families of Gage, Alcock, Vavasour, Gifford of Buckinghamshire, and Philipps of Yorkshire had daughters—in the case of the Alcocks five in number—who were nuns at Gravelines, St. Omer, and Brussels. Sir George Browne's daughter, and two girls of Lord Montagu's were living with the nuns at St. Omer.[2] Intercepted letters from Elizabeth Mornington to her friends in Antwerp refer to negotiations for placing a girl called 'Little Nanne' with the Infanta, at Brussels or at Ghent, and another girl called Tipper in 'a Religious Course, for £50 monie or 20 nobles a yeare'. In another case a fee of £200 was offered for the reception of a young gentlewoman of good breeding into the life of religion.[3] A homely picture of life in the Augustine Convent of English nuns at Louvain (established by Mrs. Mary Wiseman in 1619) is afforded by the correspondence of the abbess, Mrs. Winefrid Thimelby, about 1668. Her two nieces Katherine and Gertrude (the 'Keat' and 'Gat' of the letters) were sent to her to finish their education, and eventually took the veil.[4]

Besides those girls belonging to Catholic families who actually entered the religious life, a large and increasing number were being surreptitiously sent abroad for purposes of education. The 'Means to reform Popish Recusants' addressed by the Commons to King James soon

[1] *Cal. Dom. S.P. Eliz.*, vol. cclxxiii, 27 (November 1599).
[2] *Dom. S.P. James I*, vol. lxxx, 57.
[3] Ib., vol. clxxxix, 19 (undated).
[4] *Tixall Letters*, vol. ii.

after his accession urged 'That all (recusants') children who from their cradles are trained up in hatred of the truth be henceforth educated in the knowledge of God and his Word and in obedience to His Majesty and his laws, to which they are strange, *many being carried beyond seas in their tender years to be there corrupted*'.[1] In 1623, one Parker, a Papist, was drowned in crossing the river with a boy and girl he was taking overseas for education in foreign seminaries.[2] Two years later the Bailiff of Sandwich complained to the council of certain watermen of London who had brought two boats full of children to Tilbury Hope where they were re-embarked in a ketch for Flanders.[3] The watermen, no doubt well feed, were such persistent offenders that example was made in the Star Chamber of those who made a trade of carrying over 'gentlemen and gentlewomen to be placed in seminaries and nunneries abroad'.[4] The authorities were constantly on the alert. Sir George Paul, His Majesty's Principal Registrar, reported the apprehension 'by the watchfull eyes and dilligence of my substitutes' of a number of young gentlemen and gentlewomen ready to depart the kingdom, 'some to be educated in the seminaries, some in the nunneries beyond the Seas'. The apprehension was made without legal warrant but with full knowledge of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the king's thanks and approval.[5]

A succession of royal proclamations recalled into England the children of recusant parents, who had thus been sent overseas; as early as 1581, a registration of the names of offenders with very full particulars had been ordered in various dioceses,[6] but it soon occurred to many minds that proclamations and seizures were not the only or the most effective method of checking the propagation of

[1] *Cal. Dom. S.P., James I, Addenda*, vol. xxxix, 118 (1610).
[2] Ib., vol. cliv, 55.
[3] *Cal. Dom. S.P. Charles I*, vol. xiii, 23.
[4] Ib., vol. cclxxvii, 7 (1634).
[5] *Dom. S.P. James I*, vol. clxxxii, 1 (1625).
[6] *Cal. Dom. S. P. Eliz.*, vol. cl, 95.

error among the young. The Dean of Durham, writing to Lord Burghley in 1597, deplored the fact that recusants' children were educated in secret, instead of in good or common schools.[1] In 1621 a petition of the House of Commons, cancelled before it was presented, proposed among other remedies for the increase of Popery, 'to recall all children of Catholics now educated abroad and to give them Protestant teachers'.[2] An Act for the education of the children of popish recusants in the true religion, drafted in 1624, proposed that all such children above nine years old should be placed at protestant places of education, or as apprentices or servants with known protestants, 'at the discretion of the parents if they be willing, but if not, then at their expense according to their position and meanes'.[3] The time was therefore ripe for the establishment of schools of unquestioned loyalty to the Anglican principles.

The first 'public school' for girls of which any record can be found was the Ladies' Hall at Deptford, patronized by the daughters of the nobility and gentry. On the 4th May 1617, through the good offices of Lucy, Countess of Bedford, permission was obtained for the young gentlewomen to play before Anne of Denmark and the Court at Greenwich a Masque called Cupid's Banishment, written by Robert White, who may have been the headmaster. The school was then not quite newly started, for the entertainment had been acted before and is described as 'A sporte our little ladies use on Candlemas night'. Most of the principal parts were played by men and boys, but the twelve nymphs of Diana were schoolgirls, dressed in white 'tinsie' with wreaths of artificial flowers and white 'pumps' and gloves. They danced elaborate figures representing Anna Regina, Jacobus Rex, and Carolus P., invented by their dancing master, Mr. Onslow. Among the dancers were two god-daughters and name-

[1] *Cal. Dom. S.P. Eliz.*, vol. cclxiii, 55 (p. 420).
[2] *Cal. Dom. S.P. James I*, vol. cxxiv, 3 (p. 316).
[3] *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *Fourth Report*, p. 123.

sakes of the queen, Anne Chalenor and Anne Sandeland, carrying needlework gifts which they were allowed to present to her Majesty after the performance.[1]

Another early school was Mrs. Freind's at Stepney. In 1628 the Court of Aldermen committed to her care their orphan ward, Anne Heather, to be brought up in 'learning at her needle, writing, musick and other qualities' at an annual fee of £21.[2] Ten years later Susan, daughter of Sir Edward Nicholas, was at a boarding-school kept by John Freind, possibly the same Stepney establishment, for these schools were often family ventures carried on from one generation to the next. Her school bill shows that much time was still devoted to embroidery.[3] The name Frend or Freind is elsewhere the English equivalent of the Huguenot L'Amy,[4] and it is not improbable that the family are to be classed among those French schoolkeepers who provided during this century and the next many gentlewomen's schools throughout the country.[5]

[1] Nicholls, *Progresses of James I*, vol. iii, p. 283.

[2] Court of Aldermen, *Ref.* 43 (1628/9), ff. 309v and 317.

[3] It runs as follows:

Mris. Nicholas

For a payer of shooes	00 – 01 – 10
For watchett sattin for her Sweet Bagge	00 – 4 – 6
For Taffetie	00 – 13 – 0
For Gold and Silver Lace	00 – 18 – 10
For Silver Ribbin	00 – 02 – 3
For an ounce of Silver Thred	00 – 5 – 4
For one quarter for her Bord and teaching due this Christmas 1639	5 – 10 – 0
For her washing and starching at 8d ye weeke	00 – 08 – 8
	07 – 03 – 7

December 23, 1639.

Recd from his Hored worthy Friend Mr. Nicholas for his Daughter the full summe of this Bill being seaven pounds, three shillings seaven pence per me Joh: Frend. (*Dom. S.P. Charles I*, vol. ccccxxxvi, 23).

[4] Cf. *Walloon and Huguenot Church of Canterbury*, App. V, p. 216.

[5] Examples quoted by Miss Lambley are M. de la Mare's boarding-school at Marylebone, where girls were taught 'to write, to read, to speak French, to sing, to dance, to play on the guitar and the spinette'—and the pension for young

The neighbourhood of London, particularly the healthy district to the north, commended itself to parents and teachers; schools for citizens' children were so numerous about Enfield and Waltham that they were regarded as a possible source of danger to the royal household at Theobald's, during the outbreak of plague in 1635.[1] Girls' schools particularly favoured Hackney, which became known as 'The Ladies' University of Female Arts'. Before 1637 Mrs. Winch had a school at Hackney, patronized by the City of London, where she boarded young gentlewomen. An orphan girl called Sara Cox, possessed of a good portion in City securities, was placed there by her friends, and one summer's evening while walking on Newington Common was abducted by the brother of a schoolfellow, a certain Roger Fulwood, seized by horsemen with drawn swords, placed in a coach and carried off screaming to Winchester House, where she was hastily married in the bishop's private chapel. These strange proceedings led to the appearance of all concerned, at one o'clock in the morning, before the Lord Mayor, and by him Sara was restored to her friends' custody.[2]

Incidents so sensational are happily rare in schoolgirl annals. Others of the Hackney schools owed distinction to the virtue or remarkable talents of some one of their pupils. Katharine Phillips, the 'Matchless Orinda', was sent in 1639 when she was eight years old to be educated by Mrs. Salmon,[3] who also some ten years later had the daughters of Sir John Bramston under her care.[4] Orinda acquired or at least developed a persevering habit of study which stood by her all her life. Mrs. Perwich's school was established in 1643, probably in a large black and white house near Hackney Church, afterwards called

ladies kept by M. Papillon in Charles Street, St. James's, where the curriculum included French, writing and singing, dancing and designing. Lambley, loc. cit., p. 299.

1 *Cal. Dom. S.P. Charles I*, vol. cccxxv, 7.

2 Ib., vol. ccclxvii, 94 (p. 422).

3 Ballard, *Celebrated Ladies*, p. 287.

4 Foster Watson, *Dict. of Education*, art. Education of Girls.

Bohemia Palace from its connexion with the Winter Queen.[1] It was a large and flourishing venture; in seventeen years, that is to say during the period of the Civil Wars and the Commonwealth, eight hundred girls passed through it, and the number at one time exceeded a hundred.[2] The pupils, girls of good family, were drawn from all parts of England, and brought their own maids with them, as was customary in the best schools of the day. Music and dancing played a prominent part in the curriculum; the young gentlewomen spent much time over their clothes, adorned themselves with patches, and read romances to their hearts' content. The teaching was carried on by visiting masters, among whom were several well-known musicians and composers of the day; Simon Ives, a singing master, was a Lay Vicar of St. Paul's, and collaborated with Lawes in his masque, the Triumph of Peace, besides contributing to such popular song-books as *Playford's Collections*. Albert Bryne, who taught the harpsichord, a composer and for a time organist of St. Paul's, and Edward Coleman, a gentleman of the Chapel Royal and a song-writer, were also members of Mrs. Perwich's staff.

It is clear that the standard of music was high, and one at least of the pupils attained such proficiency in violin playing, and the art of composing extempore variations upon a given theme, that she attracted the attention of Henry Lawes, Christopher Simpson,[3] and John Jenkins, who visited the school to hear her performances. This was Susanna Perwich, who with her sisters was educated from the age of seven in her mother's school where, after she grew up, she acted as an assistant. Besides the violin or 'Lyra Viol', she played the lute and harpsichord, was an accomplished singer, and studied books on harmony

[1] Robinson, *History of Hackney*, vol. i, p. 212. In 1788 this house was still a boarding-school (Mrs. La Borde's), cf. Nichols, *Hist. of Canonbury*, p. 9.

[2] *The Virgin's Pattern*, 1661, Epistle Dedicatory, p. 2.

[3] Author of *The Division Violist, or an Introduction to the Playing upon a Ground*. In the nomenclature of the day, division = variation; ground = theme; see Groves, *Dictionary of Music*, art. Division.

and composition. The pupils at Mrs. Perwich's were given the opportunity of practising chamber music; led by Susanna's violin, they formed an orchestra of lutes and viols, accompanied by the harpsichord and organ. Susanna was also the leader of the young gentlewomen in country dances, French dances, and others she had herself composed, under the guidance of the celebrated dancing master, Mr. Hazard. In addition to these accomplishments, she had acquired, and no doubt imparted to her pupils, 'all other parts of excellent well-breeding', which included calligraphy, accountancy, housewifery, cookery, and a series of minor handicrafts in silver, straw, glass, wax, and gum, as well as fine embroidery, black work, white work, and work in colours.[1] The poetic description of her needlework resembles that of Queen Edith's, centuries before; she could make,

> Pictures of men, birds, beasts and flowers
> When Leisure serv'd at idle hours,
> All this so rarely to the life,
> As if there were a kind of strife
> Twixt Art and Nature: trees of fruit
> With leaves, boughs, branches, body, root,
> She made to grow in Winter time
> Ripe to the eye.[2]

Another echo of medieval manners occurs in the account of her perfect deportment, 'her handsom sitting at her Musick,' when she played or sang:

> No antick gestures or bold face
> No wrigling motions her disgrace—
> While she's at play nor eye nor head
> Hither or thither wandered
> Nor nods nor heaves in any part
> As taken with her own rare Art . . .
> With body she ne're sat ascue
> Or mouth awry as others do.[3]

[1] One of the wreaths at her funeral was 'a fine costly garland of gum-work'.
[2] *Virgin's Pattern*, p. 55.
[3] Ib., p. 53.

This paragon of the schools died in her father's house before she was twenty-five and was buried in Hackney Church, in the grave of a school-fellow, the beautiful Anne Carew.

Hackney continued in vogue as a centre for girls' schools for at least a century. In the diary for the 20th April 1667 Pepys records a visit to Hackney Church, explaining ingenuously 'that which I went chiefly to see was the young ladies of the schools, whereof there is great store, very pretty'.[1] In 1675 Ralph Josselin's wife took her two daughters Mary and Elizabeth to complete their education at 'Hackney School'.[2] The Court of Aldermen patronized Mrs. Crittenden's school in the same district, and in 1682 paid her £25, fees on account, for two of their orphan wards, Elizabeth and Mary Eden.[3] The name and tradition of Mrs. Slater's school, especially favoured in the eighteenth century by Hull merchants, lingered on in Hackney Lane till a comparatively recent period.[4] Another North London boarding-school was kept in a house opposite Islington Church by the wife of the song-writer John Playford, 'where young gentlewomen may be instructed in all manner of Curious Works, as also Reading, Writing, Music, Dancing, and the French Language.'[5]

To the pre-Restoration group of London schools may be added the academy of Mrs. Margaret Kilvert, who, like Mrs. Makin, had probably been a lady in the entourage of Princess Elizabeth. Claude Mauger's celebrated French Grammar, *The True Advancement of the French Tongue*, in the 1652 edition, contains the names of more than forty of his girl-pupils, who were probably boarders at this school, together with verses applauding their talents and industry. This little schoolgirls' anthology, unique of its kind, if of no great literary value, conveys a pleasant impression of the attitude, kindly, almost fatherly,

1 Pepys, *Diary*, ed. 1825, p. 44.
2 Ralph Josselin's *Diary*, Camd. Soc., Third Series, 1908, vol. xv, p. 167.
3 Guildhall Records, Shelf 493, Orphanage Receipts of Stock, February 1682.
4 *Glimpses of Ancient Hackney*, by F.R.C.S. (Dr. Benjamin Clarke), p. 195.
5 Foster Watson, *Dictionary of Education*, art. Education of Girls.

and not a little amused, of the exiled Frenchman towards his English scholars. One example may be quoted; it is addressed: 'A la Louänge de mes très Illustres et très généreux demoiselles, Mesdemoiselles Susane Balam et Elizabeth Kaistian, mes très honorées et très diligentes Escholières.'

Vostre esprit relevé vous rend incomparables,
On vous doit estimer l'Honneur de vostre temps,
Vous employés si bien vos prétieux moments,
Que vous serés bien tost du tout Inimitables.
Vous vous rendrés enfin si fort considerables
Qu'on parlera de vous dans des ravissements,
On vous croira du temps les plus chers ornements,
Toutes vos actions vous rendant admirables,
Poursuivés, chers objets, cette noble ferveur,
Establissés par lá une insigne grandeur,
Appuyés vostre espoir dessus vostre memoire
Qui vous ayant acquis depuis si peu de mois
Toutes les belles fleurs du langage françois
Immortalisera vostre nom dans l'histoire.[1]

The fashion set by the Ladies' Hall was later followed by a number of schools which were established in the neighbourhood of the River. In 1649 Evelyn went to Putney 'by water in a barge with divers ladies to see the Schooles and Colledges of the young gentlewomen'.[2] Another riverside school had migrated in 1680 from Leicester Fields to 'the Great School-house at Chelsey that was Mr. Portman's'.[3] The proprietor, Mr. Josias Priest, was a fashionable dancing master and inventor of stage-dances. He induced Nahum Tate and Purcell, then a very young man, to collaborate in producing a little opera, *Dido and Æneas*, which was played on several occasions by the gentlewomen of the school before their parents and friends.[4] For one of these performances

[1] Mauger, *True Advancement of the French Tongue*, 1652.
[2] Evelyn, *Diary* (ed. 1819), vol. i, p. 237.
[3] *London Gazette*, No. 1567, 22–5 Nov. 1680. (Gorges House, afterwards purchased by Sir William Milman.)
[4] D. Barclay Squire, *Purcell's Dramatic Music*, p. 506.

D'Urfey wrote an Epilogue, spoken by Lady Dorothy Burke, daughter of the Earl of Clanricarde.[1]

This school had evidently a reputation both in town and country. Thither in 1682 Sir Edmund Verney conducted his little eight-year old daughter Mary, introducing her on the way to the sights of London, Bartholomew Fair, and the tombs in Westminster Abbey, and lingering in town until he had 'a little wonted' the country-bred child to her strange surroundings. Dancing occupied the foremost place in the curriculum, and a ball was occasionally given at the school to display the pupils' skill. Handicraft was also taught: Mary Verney was eager to master the fashionable art of Japanning boxes.

'I find you have a desire', Sir Edmund wrote to her, 'to learn to Japan as you call it, and I approve of it; and so I shall of anything that is Good and Virtuous, therefore learn in God's name all Good Things and I will willingly be at the Charge so farr as I am able, tho' they come from Japan and from never so farr and Looke of an Indian Hue and Odour, for I admire all accomplishments that will render you considerable and Lovely in the sight of God and man. . . .'

The charge in this case was a guinea entrance fee and forty shillings for materials.[2]

Another girls' school at Chelsea was kept by Mr. William Dyer, who moved on to Kensington in 1683, and took over a school belonging to the celebrated dancing master Mr. Hazard, formerly a member of Mrs. Perwich's staff.[3] In this, as in many other instances, husband and wife were jointly responsible for the conduct of the school; when Mrs. Hazard died in 1682, Mr. Hazard publicly made it known to his patrons that he had engaged a lady in her place to undertake the care and government of the scholars and household.[4]

Country-bred girls often went to town to be 'finished';

[1] D. Barclay Squire, *Purcell's Dramatic Music*, p. 508.
[2] *Memoirs of the (Verney) Family*, vol. iv, p. 220.
[3] *London Gazette*, No. 1839, 2–5 July 1683.
[4] Ib., No. 1625, 13–16 June 1682.

Mrs. Chaloner's school in London received Martha Mayhew, the niece and adopted daughter of a Sussex parson, the Reverend Giles Moore, who paid for her teaching, with some demur, fees amounting to £12 a year, and provided at the same time a New Testament and Bible, a pair of shoes with red silk shoe-strings, and half a crown for pocket money.[1]

It was not, however, in all cases necessary to send girls to London; there were schools in many country places. A very early example was Mrs. Isley's at Westerham in Kent, where Ann Courtney and her sister Frances (afterwards the mother of Lord Howard of Effingham) were sent in 1620, to be taught 'to work, write and dance and play upon some sorts of musick'.[2] Another, in Manchester, was kept by a Mrs. Parnell Amye (whose name again suggests Huguenot origin).[3] It had been in existence for some five and thirty years (1638–73) when the headmistress, no doubt in view of advancing age, decided to keep a public school no longer—but merely to have two girls to live with her. This establishment is specially noteworthy, for it illustrates the transition between the old fashion of placing a girl at board and school and a more developed scholastic institution. Mrs. Amye herself undertook for a fee of £11 a year entire charge of the girls, many of them 'children of rank and quality', to provide them with meat, drink, lodging, fuel, washing and candle-light, and to 'bring them up with reading' and all kinds of needlework. At certain times she engaged a scrivener, a dancing master, and a music master to give them special lessons for which a separate fee was charged. It is clear from her correspondence with the parents of her pupils that she was not herself a highly educated woman—though no doubt quite competent for the special duties she undertook. When she grew 'were of great impliment'

[1] 'Journal and Account Book of the Reverend Giles Moore.' *Sussex Archaeol. Collections*, vol. i, p. 105.

[2] *Memoirs of Sir George Courthop*, Camd. Miscell., vol. xi, p. 103.

[3] She habitually writes 'col' and 'collers' for school and scholars, which suggests a confusion with *école* and *écoliers*.

and decided to retire into private life she proposed to send her two remaining boarders not to a public day school in the town, which seemed to her undesirable, but to a minister who had thirty scholars, at twenty shillings a girl. This is of interest as showing that in a small place like Manchester in 1673 more than one girls' school was available. In 1684 we hear of Ralph Thoresby, the antiquary, then a young man, riding to Manchester to place his sister at school with 'Madam Frankland'.[1]

Oxford, a seat of learning, made the fashionable provision for girls to learn dancing, music, singing, and all manner of works. Mr. John Waver, a dancing master, had a school in Holywell parish[2] in 1676; the Virgins' Hall, in the same city, was established before 1679.[3] Ten miles away at Burchester Mrs. Jane Brashinton's young ladies attended dancing classes held by Mr. Edward Throckmorton.[4] In 1687 the wife of the grammar school master at Leicester, Mr. John Angell, took gentlewomen scholars who attended St. Martin's Church and had a special seat in the gallery.[5] There were early girls' schools also in Exeter, whether day or boarding is not apparent; Mrs. Crosse, a widow, kept school about 1641, but was suspected of being a witch, which cost her at least one pupil, who went instead to Goodwife Woodman's.[6]

The system of education in public schools had, or was supposed to have, a marked effect upon elegance of diction and deportment. Mrs. Woolley, the lively young wife of an usher in Newport grammar school, comments on the absence of good reading, and hence of conversational material, which 'hath made so many Country Gentlewomen stand like so many Mutes or Statues when they

[1] *Diary of Ralph Thoresby*, vol. ii, Appendix, p. 425.

[2] *London Gazette*, No. 1180, 8–12 Mar. 1676/7, and No. 1496, 18–22 Mar. 1679/80.

[3] *Reliquiae Hearnianae*, ed. Bliss, iii. 46.

[4] *London Gazette*, No. 1744, 3–7 Aug. 1682.

[5] *Records of the Borough of Leicester*, ed. Helen Stocks and W. H. Stevenson, Camb. Univ. Press (1923), p. 587.

[6] Cotton and Woolcombe, *Gleanings from the Municipal and Cathedral Records of Exeter*, p. 152.

have hapned into the company of the ingenious; their quaint expressions have seem'd to them Arabian sentences and have stared like so many distracted persons in that they should hear the sound of English and yet understand but here and there a word of their own language'.[1] The services of a schoolmistress even of a somewhat tarnished reputation were eagerly sought after by village damsels, provided only she were city-bred. She brought her frivolous ideas into the countryside, and insisted on her young pupils observing strange points of etiquette, and not even asking their parents' blessing without a compliment.[2]

2. *Criticism of the Boarding-Schools*

It is evident that the number of public schools for girls up and down the country was steadily increasing. Although they had come into being to supply a definite need, they unfortunately developed in ways which aroused well-merited distrust. The setting of opinion against them was no doubt due in part to the light and frivolous character of the curriculum, which continued throughout the Commonwealth period to cut across the prevailing gravity of manners. The Puritan autobiographer Joseph Lister describes his refusal of a situation as serving man in one of the Hackney schools; it was a place for young gentlewomen to learn to play and dance and sing 'which did not at all suit with me'; although part of his duty was to carry Bibles to church on Sunday and bring them home at night there was no daily family prayer at morning and evening.[3] His objections touched only the outer fringe; there were others that went deeper. The biographer of Susanna Perwich refers to 'the opinion of such as greatly blame the education of publick Schools, as if they were places of all other most dangerous to corrupt the manners of youth'.[4] Fuller's views have already been

[1] Hannah Woolley, *The Gentlewoman's Companion, or a Guide to the Female Sex* (1675), p. 7.

[2] Brathwait, loc. cit., p. 71 (1631).

[3] *Autobiography of Joseph Lister*, ed. T. Wright, 1842, p. 27.

[4] *Virgin's Pattern*, Epistle Dedicatory, 1661.

quoted.[1] Aubrey specially condemned the Hackney schools as places where young maids learnt pride and wantonness.[2]

The boarding-schools appear to have shared in the general deterioration of public manners which followed the Restoration. The dramatists constantly held up to contemptuous ridicule the snobbery they engendered and their hopeless inefficiency. Striller, in *The Humourists* (1670), boasts of her breeding at Hackney School in the society of substantial citizens' daughters,[3] much as the Miller's wife extolled

> her nortelrye
> That she had lerned in the nonnerye.

D'Urfey's vulgar comedy, *Love for Money, or the Boarding School*, probably composed after he had spent the summer of 1690 as the guest of Mr. Priest at Chelsea, mercilessly parodies many features of school life.[4] It is evident that he had closely observed the boarders and their teachers and could not, in fact, resist the temptation to make copy out of 'this new humour of a school'.

Several scenes are laid in the schoolroom: Semi-brif, a music master, teaches the hoyden, Miss Molly, to sing, under difficulties; she holds her prick-song in one hand, in the other a large slice of bread-and-butter, which she bites at in the intervals of practising a trill. Her companion, Miss Jenny, takes her dancing lesson to a patter that still has a familiar ring:

> Make your Honours, Misse, tholl, loll, loll,
> Now to me Childe, tholl, loll, loll,
> Aiery and easy now, tholl, loll, loll,
> Very well done, Misse, tholl, loll, loll,
> Raise up your Body, Childe, tholl, loll,
> Then you in time will rise, hosh, tholl, la—

Meanwhile, Crowstick, a mistress, looks after the wardrobe of the great romping girls, always tearing their clothes, and orders the cook-maid to 'cut a hundred and

[1] See *supra*, pp. 195–6.
[2] Aubrey, *Miscellanies*, (ed. 1857), p. 219.
[3] *Humourists*, Act. V.
[4] Barclay Squire, loc. cit., p. 512.

fifty pieces of bread-and-butter round the loaf'. Breakfast is served at nine o'clock, and the pupils 'watch the hour as warily as a Parson does his Glass when he is tired of preaching; this is their bread-and-butter day, and each of them has a full half-yard by measure, of which if there were but an Inch wanting, the greedy things will cry they are starv'd and complain to their parents'.[1]

Girls' schools such as these writers had in mind afforded no bulwark of sound moral teaching against the corruption of the times; too often, they gave their pupils a lead upon the downward path. The chorus of rebuke and ridicule sounds continually, until near the close of the eighteenth century.

Some attempts were, however, made to promote institutions where the tone was higher and more serious. The idea of educating girls in a religious atmosphere, withdrawn from contact with the world's temptations, still had its attraction for many minds, although anything suggestive of the cloister was firmly repudiated. Lettice, Lady Falkland, a daughter of Sir Richard Morison, had a design for promoting 'places for the education of young Gentlewomen and for retirement of Widows (as Colleges and the Inns of Court and Chancery are for men), in several parts of the Kingdom'. Lady Falkland died about 1649, her intention unfulfilled owing to the unsettlement of the times.[2] After the Restoration and during the reigns of Mary and Anne her ideas were more than once revived. One writer, after referring to the prevailing dissatisfaction with 'maiden schools' in private ownership, proposed the establishment of Protestant colleges under public control; collegiate life had proved advantageous for youths and might prove as successful for girls.[3] Another scheme for the establishment of a religious house in Scotland was to be without the 'known inconveniences' of foreign nunneries and yet give to the devout an opportunity of withdrawing

[1] D'Urfey, *Love for Money, or the Boarding School* (1691), Act I, Scene ii.
[2] M. Howard, *Lettice, Lady Falkland*, p. 92.
[3] Foster Watson, *Dict. of Education*, art. Education of Girls, &c.

from the hurry of the world, and to all the opportunity of a strict and virtuous education.[1]

The *Serious Proposal* of Mary Astell (1697) embodied similar ideas. She expressed indeed no great objection to boarding-schools,[2] but wished to remedy the scarcity of suitable teachers by a foundation for ladies, which, ill-advisedly in view of popular feeling, she called 'A Monastery or Religious Retirement'. The place, she says,[3] is to be 'a Type and Antepast of Heav'n, where your Employments will be, as there, to magnify God, to love one another, and to communicate that useful Knowledge which by the due improvement of your time in Study and Contemplation you will obtain'; it is to provide 'a Seminary to stock the Kingdom with pious and prudent Ladies, and is to expel that cloud of Ignorance which Custom has involv'd us in . . . and to furnish our minds with a stock of solid and useful Knowledge, that the Souls of Women may no longer be the only unadorn'd and neglected things'. There is to be no question of producing female virtuosos; no more languages are to be studied than may serve for a key to the best books, as for instance, Descartes and Malebranche, Mesdames Dacier and Scudéry. The pupils may be heiresses, kept secure from the rude attempts of designing suitors until an honourable marriage can be arranged for them; or as the revenues of the house improve, they may, of its charity, be the daughters of decayed gentlemen. It is, adds the authoress, 'no inconsiderable advantage to the Nation, the preserving girls from dishonour and making them good wives'.[4]

If somewhat rambling and ill-defined, Mary Astell's treatise is the work of a woman with ideas and ideals, possessing deep religious feeling and an uncommon sense of public duty. Defoe criticized her plan on the ground

[1] *Hist. MSS. Comm., First Rep.* vol. i, p. 118 (*Dalbousie Papers*).

[2] Cf. *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex*, 2nd edition (1696), p. 37.

[3] *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of their True and Greatest Interest*, in two parts, by a Lover of her Sex (1697), pp. 42–52.

[4] Ib., pp. 90–3.

that it would impose too great restraint on the levity of youth and savoured too much of the nunnery. He had an alternative proposal of his own;[1] the academy outlined in his *Essay on Projects* is to differ little from existing public schools. He desires good discipline but no spying or excessive supervision. At the same time, intrigue must be guarded against, and the school buildings are accordingly to be so arranged that 'the Eye might at a Glance see from one Coin to the other'. An Act of Parliament is to make it 'Felony without Clergy for any man to enter by Force or Fraud . . . or to solicit any Woman, though it were to Marry, while she was in the House'.[2] These precautions throw a sinister light on contemporary manners, and contrast unfavourably with Mrs. Astell's place of retirement, hallowed by the atmosphere of piety.[3] The breeding suited to Defoe's young scholars is to consist chiefly of music and dancing, 'which it would be cruel to bar the Sex of, because they are their Darlings'. Languages, French, Italian, he does not much approve of; the one essential is the teaching 'as a particular Study, all the graces of Speech and all the necessary Air of Conversation which our common Education is so defective in that I need not expose it'.[4]

There is little here to point a way to progress. Yet Defoe may be claimed as a stalwart champion of the principle of equal opportunity; he feels it a 'barbarity' to deny learning to women; 'in short', he says, 'I wou'd have Men take Women for Companions and Educate them to be fit for it'.[5]

Those who advocated reform were not satisfied merely with Utopian schemes. The Quakers were prompt in supplying schools for the young members of their body. George Fox advised the foundation of a school for boys

1 D. Defoe, *An Essay upon Projects* (1697), p. 282 et seq.

2 Ib., p. 291.

3 She fully understood the dangers and remarks (*Serious Proposal* p. 71): 'Tis become no easy matter to secure our Innocence in our necessary Civilities and daily conversations.'

4 Defoe, loc. cit., p. 292.

5 Ib., p. 302.

at Waltham and another at Shacklewell for girls, 'for instructing them in whatsoever things were civil and useful in the creation'.[1] John Beller's *College of Industry* (1696) was to benefit children of both sexes, and of rich and poor Friends indiscriminately, giving them training in languages, science, industrious exercises, and literature.[2] The deep and weighty concern for education always characteristic of the Society, was exercised specially to train for teaching any child of outstanding ability, and to show encouragement to schoolmasters and schoolmistresses who were faithful Friends and well qualified to give instruction wherever they were needed. In 1671 the Friends had interests in fifteen boarding-schools; those at Warrington and Brighton were for girls; those at Ramsay (Hants) and Thornbury (Glos.) were co-educational.[3]

About 1673 Mrs. Bathsua Makin established her school for gentlewomen at Tottenham High Cross on the road to Ware.[4] After setting out the qualifications which determined her selection by King Charles I to be governess to the Princess Elizabeth, she places in the forefront of her syllabus instruction in 'the principles of religion and all manner of sober and virtuous education'. She had not the temerity to break definitely with prevailing fashions, but compromised by undertaking to teach half the time 'all things ordinarily taught in other schools, works of all sorts, dancing, music, singing, writing, keeping accounts'; the rest of the day was to be spent in acquiring Latin and French, while 'those that please may learn Greek and Hebrew, the Italian and Spanish in all which this gentlewoman hath a complete knowledge'. Mrs. Makin's school advertisement describes her methods in considerable detail, and reflects clearly enough the influence of Bacon

[1] *Journal of George Fox*, vol. ii, p. 89 (1667).

[2] Samuel Tuke, *Education in the Society of Friends* (1871), Part I, p. 10.

[3] Ib., p. 8.

[4] She may have taken over, with a view to its improvement, an earlier venture. A widow, Mrs. Suzan Gardener of 'Totnam hie Crosse', in 1628, had charge of Mary Brookes, a ward of the Court of Aldermen, and orphan daughter of a cutler in the City of London.

and Comenius. For those who are no longer able to seek further information at Mr. Mason's coffee-house, the projects of the good governess deserve quotation.

'Gentlewomen of eight or nine years old that can read well may be instructed in a year or two (according to their Parts) in the Latin and French Tongues; by such plain and short Rules accommodated to the Grammar of the English Tongue, that they may easily keep what they have learned, and recover what they shall lose; as those that learn Musick by Notes. Those that will bestow longer time, may learn the other Languages afore-mentioned, as they please. *Repositories* also for Visibles shall be prepared; by which, from beholding the things, Gentlewomen may learn the Names, Natures, Values, and Use of Herbs, Shrubs, Trees, Mineral Juices, Metals and Stones. Those that please may learn Limning, Preserving, Pastry and Cookery. Those that will allow longer time may attain some general Knowledge in Astronomy, Geography; but especially in Arithmetick and History. Those that think one Language enough for a Woman, may forbear the Languages, and learn onely Experimental Philosophy; and more or fewer of the other things afore-mentioned as they incline. The Rate certain shal be 20*l* per annum: But if a competent improvement be made in the Tongues, and the other things aforementioned, as shall be agreed upon, then something more will be expected. But the Parents shall judge what shall be deserved by the Undertaker. Those that think these things improbable or impracticable may have further account every Tuesday at Mr. Mason's Coffee-house in Cornhil near the Royal Exchange; and Thursdayes at the Bolt and Tun in Fleet-Street, between the hours of three and six in the afternoon by some person whom Mris. Makin shall appoint.'[1]

In Mrs. Woolley's homely and sensible exhortation to the schoolgirl, or as she expressed it, 'To the Female Younger Sort',[2] it is evident that a day school only was in question, where the education was of an elementary character, the pupils of no exalted rank.

'To the Female Younger Sort. . . . Hasten to school, having first taken your leave of your Parents with all reverence. Do not loyter

[1] Advertisement of Mrs. Makin's School, from *An Essay to Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen*, p. 42.

[2] Hannah Woolley, *The Gentlewoman's Companion or a Guide to the Female Sex* (1675), p. 17.

by the way or play the truant; abuse none whom you meet, but be courteous and mannerly to all who speak with you. Leave not any thing behind which you ought to carry with you, not only things you Learn in or by, but also Gloves, Pocket-Handkerchiefs. . . . When you come to School salute your Mistress in a reverent manner and be sure to mind what she injoyns you to do or observe. You cannot but live well if you conform to what you hear. . . . Having done this, salute civilly your School-fellows and then apply yourself to your book, work, writing or what ever else you are to learn. Show not your ill-breeding and want of manners by eating in the School, especially before your Mistress. . . . When you are called to read, come reverently to your Mistress or any whom she appoints; avoid reading with a tone, huddle not over your lesson, but strive to understand what you read, and read so plainly, distinctly and deliberately that others may understand; if you are doubtful of a word, carefully spell it and mistake not one word for another; when you have done, return, shewing your reverence, to your place. Whatever work you take in hand do it cleanly and well, though you are the longer about it; and have a care of wasting or losing any thing that appertains thereunto. Sit upright at your work and do not lean or lol, and forbear to carry Children in your arms out of a wanton humour; for these, whilst you are so young, may incline your body to crookedness. If you write, be careful you do not blot your paper; take pains in the true forming or cutting your letters and endeavour to write true and well after your copy. Preserve your Pens, spill not your Ink, nor flurt it on your own or others' clothes, and keep your fingers from being polluted therewith.'

XII

ASPECTS OF SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY EDUCATION

1. *Introductory*

THE educational influences of the seventeenth century are far more complex than anything with which hitherto we have had to deal. The personality of Queen Elizabeth, her intellectual gifts and natural bent towards serious study, remained until the close of her reign an effective factor in the development of women's education; but a turn of the tide had already come. When the generation or two immediately following Margaret Roper and the Lady Jane Grey had passed away, little more is heard of the training of girls in classic literature. The ideas of the Humanists were assimilated by that other spiritual force which dominated social history in the sixteenth century: the reformation in religious thought. The new religious training for girls differed from the old, but it was no less influential; the essence of protestantism, its emphasis upon the claims of the individual conscience, had a special significance for women because of their long and unquestioning obedience to tradition. The newly acquired power to read and to procure books, opening up for individual study the treasure of the Scriptures, as well as the wisdom of the theologians and the story of the martyrs, was to many a kind of intoxication. The study of Plato had been to Lady Jane Grey a joyful revelation, the study of the Bible absorbed her successors; while the liberty of religion signified for the great majority of her sex more, far more, even than the liberty of classic literature had signified for the chosen few. 'Our very Reformation of Religion', wrote Mrs. Makin, a leading educationist of her day, 'seems to be begun and carried on by women.' [1]

Next in importance to the theological position must

[1] Makin, *An Essay to Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen*, p. 28.

be placed the great educational reforms in the substance and method of teaching which first found expression in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, and were developed and applied to the practical ends of the school by Ratke and Comenius. How far these had their effect on the training of girls is a question needing consideration.

The arrival of Queen Henrietta Maria, and the consequent accession of French manners for which the labours of the refugee schoolmaster had prepared a ready acceptance, came at a time when the salon, the polite arts of conversation and of letter-writing, the romance, even a pseudo-platonism, were the fashionable cult; they introduce into the situation factors that are partly novel, but partly bring again into relief older characteristics of girls' upbringing, to which the popularity of Castiglione's *Courtier* had already given a new lease of life. The existence of two ideals, which, if not at all points contradictory, are yet conflicting in many respects, is constantly felt; especially during the period of the Commonwealth, when the girls' boarding-schools were educating in accomplishments the cavalier's daughter, while a home-training in Bible-study, domesticity, and practical philanthropy represented for the most part the puritan conception. As a result new types of womanhood come into being, differing as greatly as the ranting woman-preacher of the new sects and the sensitive child (like Susanna Perwich or Mary Evelyn), torn in two between ideals impossible to reconcile, wearing the hair-shirt of hidden austerity while she joins the gay dances which seem to hurry her and her companions to the brink of destruction.

Generally speaking, during the century the level of culture undoubtedly rises. If the novel resumes, even extends, its sway, there is also more widespread interest in poetry and drama, in history and philosophy. Countrywomen cut off from the fashionable theatre, content themselves with taking down the works of Shakespeare from the library shelves;[1] townswomen are interested in

[1] Cf. *Cal. Dom. S.P. Charles I*, vol. ccccix, 167.

contemporary biography, like Mrs. Elizabeth Josselyn of Fleet Street who lent her fellow-lodger, John Felton, Buckingham's assassin, her books to read, all of which he returned except the *History of the Queen of Scots*.[1]

The study of the vernacular, which the brilliant literary outburst of Elizabeth's reign had so greatly stimulated, which was advocated as a potent educational influence by Bacon and Comenius, was of especial value to women, now that books were readily obtainable. The teaching of music, vocal and instrumental, took a great stride forward; some of the leading girls' schools were in embryo academies of music, and the best musicians of the day, like Purcell and Henry Lawes, wrote for girls' voices and instruments to interpret their compositions. The power of self-expression, which had made a tentative appearance during the poetic revival, was strengthened; women-artists, authors, and dramatists became more numerous although still regarded with considerable suspicion. In one of the dialogues in Paul Festéau's *New French Grammar*, a gentlewoman calling upon her friend finds her making a fair copy of a sonnet composed the previous day. The caller protests against her occupation; 'it belongs to none but men to make verses.' The sonneteer, however, by the example of Origen, triumphantly proves her case.[2] Women begin to state with freedom their ideas upon their own educational needs and their wishes for their children. At the close of the period, under the inspiration and by the initiative of Mrs. Makin, there is an attempt to revive the more solid type of girls' education characteristic of Tudor times. Training in practical domestic duties is still of the first importance; efforts are made to improve such useful accomplishments as keeping accounts; needlework is regarded as having a direct influence on feminine psychology, and the Baconic theory of 'invention' and the educational value of experiment finds a pathetic travesty in the universal taste for 'curious arts' of every description.

[1] Ib., vol. cxviii, 16. [2] Paul Festéau, *New French Grammar*, 1685, p. 337.

What has been said has reference chiefly to girls of the upper and middle classes. Among the artisans and labouring people there is still opportunity for trade-education by apprenticeship, although the status of the girl-apprentice has been permanently lowered as a result of Elizabethan legislation. The number of charitable schools, already noticeable before the close of the sixteenth century, constantly increases, and in them the educational stress is laid chiefly upon religion and bible-study and the elements of reading and writing, with an undue preponderance of plain sewing.

2. *Educational Opinion: Bacon and Comenius*

The publication of the *Advancement of Learning* in 1605 is the keystone of educational history in the seventeenth century. Henceforth education, the teacher's art, is included among the sciences, and the exact study of method on modern lines begins slowly to revolutionize the scholastic world. Bacon did not develop a complete system of education; he adumbrated great ideas to which those who came after him gave practical shape. His master-mind could indeed perceive the interrelation of all departments of knowledge, the necessity for studying nature by a careful observation of the facts of nature, in order to arrive at last at basic principles. It fell to his disciples, schoolmasters actively engaged in teaching, to apply his pansophic ideal to the details of a school time-table, and to interpret his methods of induction into terms of diagrams and pictures. The earliest of these interpreters was Wolfgang Ratke, but the greatest and the most significant for English scholarship was the Moravian pastor John Amos Comenius. In the fourth decade of the century the works of Comenius began to be known in England through the translations of Samuel Hartlibb, Milton's friend, and to produce in certain directions considerable effect. Comenius, unlike Milton in the *Areopagitica*, legislated educationally for both sexes. There is

need in every country, he declared in the *Magna Didactica* (1638), for public schools for youth, equally for girls as for boys, 'Equally are they God's image; equally are they partakers of grace . . . equally are they furnished with minds agile and capable of wisdom, yea often beyond our sex'. The ideas of Comenius found their most convinced exponent as regards girls in Mrs. Bathsua Makin, but throughout the century there are indications that they were at work in the minds of parents and teachers, not least in the advocacy of gentleness rather than violent compulsion in governing young lives. The beginnings of elementary science-teaching, by the use of 'sensibles', is traceable to this source. 'Everything', Comenius had written, 'should be presented to as many senses as possible, namely, visible things to sight, audible things to hearing, odorous things to the smelling sense, sapid things to the taste, tangible to the touch, and when things have reference to more senses than one they should be presented to all those senses.'[1] This injunction accounts not only for certain features in the syllabus of seventeenth-century girls' schools, but also for the popularity of such exhibitions as Tradescant's Ark with its motley collection of 'visibles'. In the same way Comenius advocated the training of youth in the use of tools and various sorts of handicraft, and in the imitation of perfect form. Hence technical training of a sort made its appearance in girls' schools, in the shape of innumerable curious and useless crafts, in every variety of medium, works in cardboard and wax, gum and feathers, which the scholars pursued with eager ingenuity. By one Puritan schoolmaster at least, Ezekiah Woodward, the Baconic method was found applicable to the teaching of religion.

3. *Echoes of Elizabethan Culture*

The fondness for learning which distinguished the Tudor Princesses appeared afresh, if with a less serious cast of mind, in the beautiful and beloved Elizabeth, the

[1] J. S. Laurie, *John Amos Comenius*, 1904, p. 146.

ill-fated Queen of Bohemia, eldest daughter of James I. Poets and writers imagined in her a reincarnation of her royal god-mother: 'Whatever was excellent or lofty in Queen Elizabeth is all compressed in the tender age of this virgin princess.'[1] Like all James the First's children, she was most carefully educated, under the supervision of her tutor, Lord Harrington: for a school-companion she had a girl of her own age, the daughter of Sir Robert Carey. She studied Latin, French, and Italian, and music under the famous Dr. John Bull.[2] Tiny notes of hers, in an exquisite childish handwriting, have been preserved, as well as her chosen motto, written in Italian in an album of signatures, 'Honesty united to cheerfulness contents me. Elizabeth P.'[3]

From Lord Harrington's Accounts, certain entries are printed in *Lives of the Princesses of England* which give a picture of her girlish industries:

'Paid to Hazard that keepeth her grace's virginals in tune, for his stipend for the quarter ending at Christmas 1612, 10*s*.' 'Paid to Mr. Beauchamp that teacheth her grace to write, for gilt paper, ink, vellum, skins and paper books for her grace's service 29*s*. 8*d*.' 'Paid to Mr. Lownes for the Book of Martyrs, a great Bible and divers other volumes of histories by her highness specially appointed to be provided, 28*l*. 10*s*.' 'To Mr. Tache that presented her grace with anagrams and verses 40*s*.'[4]

The account indeed might serve as a summary of the polite education of the day, with its characteristic admixture of piety and accomplishment.

Fashions in cultivated taste which had characterized the close of Elizabeth's reign lingered on till they become

[1] Wood, *Lives of the Princesses of England*, vol. v, p. 163.

[2] Ib., p. 155.

[3] Ib., p. 157.

[4] Ib., p. 173. An anecdote in the *Commonplace Book of John Collet* (1633) suggests that James I favoured domesticity rather than learning: 'When a learned maid', the story runs, 'was presented to King James for an English rarity, because she could speake and rite pure Latine, Greeke and Hebrew, the King ask'd "But can shee spin?"' (Collet, p. 129, quoted *Anecd. and Traditions*, Camd. Soc., 1839, p. 125).

mere affectations or mingled grotesquely with fresh modes of thought and speech. The memory of Sir Philip Sidney and the style of his *Arcadia* were long cherished among society ladies. That 'planet of wit', Madona Saviolina, in Ben Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour* (1600), converses in such an elegant manner that she is said to 'observe as pure and as choice figures in her ordinary conferences as any that be in the Arcadia'.[1] Lady Mary Wroath (to whom, in 1610, Jonson dedicated *The Alchemist*) wrote, on the model of *Arcadia*, a curious book, *The Countess of Mountgomerie's Urania*, now very rare.[2] Lady Mary was Sidney's niece, and the Countess (Lady Susan Vere) a granddaughter of Lord Burleigh; in such company the old splendid tradition was most likely to remain. A belated tribute appeared in 1651, when a young gentlewoman, Mrs. A. W. [Anna Weamys] produced a continuation of the old favourite relating the loves of Amphialus and Helen,[3] which was dedicated to 'the two unparalleled sisters and patterns of virtue Lady Anne and Lady Grace Perpoint, daughters of the Marquess of Dorchester'.

A quasi-educational treatise, by Richard Brathwait entitled 'The English Gentlewoman, drawne out to the full Body, expressing What Habilliments doe best attire her, What Ornaments doe best adorne her, What Complements doe best accomplish her', first published in 1631, and again enlarged in 1641, gathers together in an odd medley fragments from Vives and *Euphues*, coupled with a nascent Puritanism. Brathwait, after studying at Oxford, and making some acquaintance with London society in the early years of James I, retired to live upon his estates in Westmoreland, and his memories of youthful experiences are mingled with observations upon contemporary manners in the country-side. Many of his injunctions are in the true medieval vein: 'Girls are apt to look about

[1] *Every Man out of his Humour*, Act II, Sc. i.

[2] '*The Countess of Mountgomerie's Urania*, written by the right honourable the Lady Mary Wroath.' London, 1621. (A manuscript note in the British Museum copy explains the relationships quoted here.)

[3] *A Continuation of Arcadia*, by Mrs. A. W.

them unduly' is the trite reproach the writer wishes to convey; although the words he employs are these: 'View those wandering lamps how they rove abroad, as if they would fly out of their Lodges and spheere themselves in some amorous Orbe.' [1]

His ideal women are the matrons of ancient Rome and the friends of St. Jerome, but although he recommends the perusal of Jerome, Cyprian, Augustine, Ambrose, Hilary, Gregory, Plato, Cicero, Seneca, as well as Vives's *Instruction*, he intimates that girls should only be expected to read Latin works in translation.[2]

4. *Cavalier and Puritan*

In the succeeding century society women looked back upon their sisters of the earlier Stuart and the Commonwealth eras as sober, uninteresting creatures, altogether given up to domesticities. In the main they rightly interpreted the preferences of that age, even though they were incapable of appreciating the noble and even heroic type of womanhood of which it afforded many examples; nor did they recognize a degree of cultivation far more thorough, within its limitations, than anything they or the majority of their contemporaries could boast.

Cavalier and Puritan alike, but especially the country gentleman, mainly on Biblical grounds, adopted a suspicious attitude towards feminine erudition, although some exception was made in favour of French culture. Sir Ralph Verney, no less than Brathwait, held views directly opposed to the Humanists: he regarded a knowledge of Latin as nothing less than 'a vice in woman'; his tastes lay in other directions. 'Good sweet hart,' he wrote during the Commonwealth, in a charming letter to his god-daughter,

'beleeve me a Bible (with ye Common prayer) and a good plaine cattichisme in your Mother tongue being well read and practised

[1] Brathwait, *The English Gentlewoman* (ed. 1631), p. 8.
[2] Ib. (ed. 1641), p. 373.

is well worth all the rest and much more sutable to your sex; I know your Father thinks this false doctrine, but bee confident your husband will bee of my oppinion. In French you cannot bee to cunning, for that language affords many admirable bookes fit for you, as Romances, Plays, Poetry, Stories of illustrious (but not learned) women, receipts for preserving, makinge creames and all sorts of cookeryes, ordring your gardens and in Breif all manner of good housewifery. If you please to have a little patience with yourselfe (without Hebrew, Greeke or Lattin) when I goe to Paris againe I will send you halfe a dozen of the french bookes to begin your Library. . . .'[1]

If these were views typical of the liberal country gentleman, the members of learned professions sometimes held more advanced opinions. It was in order to assist her father, the King's Physician, Dr. Denton, that Sir Ralph's correspondent was proceeding to school in France, in girlish light-heartedness to study Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

Some few hints of the trend of ideas in the Puritan camp may be gathered here and there. The very fact that the daughter of the Cavalier so often, in spite of war and tumult, continued to sing and dance at her Public School, lent emphasis to Puritan approval of a strict home-training in housecraft and piety.

By contrast with his earlier picture of the society lady, Brathwait drew in more sober tints her Puritanical sister: 'She desires not', he writes,

'to have the esteeme of any She-clarke; she had rather bee approved by her living than learning. . . . Some Bookes shee reads and those powerfull to stirre up devotion and fervour to prayer. Herbals shee peruseth, which shee seconds with conference. . . . She is no busie-body, nor was ever, unless it were about her family, needle or Sampler.'[2]

Ezekiah Woodward required parents in educating their girls to impart such general instruction as they were able to give, in 'all qualities . . . which may set off and yet stand with decency and sobrietie: more especially . . . the

[1] *Memoirs of the Verney Family*, vol. iii, p. 73.
[2] *Time's Treasury* (1641), p. 398.

essentialls of huswifery, unto all that may make her rejoice in time to come. . . .'[1]

Milton's description in *Paradise Lost* of the subservient Eve and his fierce attacks on her sex:

> Out of my sight, thou serpent, that name best
> Befits thee with him leagu'd, thyself as false
> And hateful . . .[2]

were no doubt coloured by his own unfortunate experience; although they were quoted by eighteenth-century writers, to prove the contempt with which ignorant womanhood had come to be regarded. Nor can the poet's neglect of his daughters' education fairly be laid at the door of Puritan opinion.

So far as any lead was given by those who now occupied the highest place, it was in the direction of domesticity. Six years after Cromwell's death, the housewifely tastes of the Lady Protectress were satirized in a book bearing the title *The Court and Kitchin of Elizabeth, commonly called Joan Cromwell.*[3]

Although Bunyan in his great allegory has a word of scorn for the 'admirable well-bred gentlewoman' whom he depicts in the society of her wanton friends, amusing herself with music and dancing, 'and what else was meet to fill up the pleasure',[4] he relaxes from the strictest standard of Puritanism to consecrate music to a higher use; he makes Prudence play to her guests upon a pair of excellent virginals and sing an excellent song,[5] while Christiana, in the second part of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, takes up her viol to lead her companions' dancing, after Giant Despair is slain, and her daughter Mercy meanwhile accompanies her on the lute.[6]

[1] Ezekiah Woodward, *Of the Child's Portion*, p. 165.
[2] *Paradise Lost*, Bk. X, l. 867.
[3] Quoted in *Daily News Article*, 'Famous Britwell Books,' 18 March 1926.
[4] *Pilgrim's Progress* (pub. Strahan, 1889), p. 261.
[5] Ib., p. 335.
[6] Ib., p. 406.

X. 'Christiana takes up her viol to lead her companions' dancing and her daughter Mercy accompanies her on the lute', p. 236

From an engraving by J. Sturt, Pilgrim's Progress (Queen Caroline's edition, 1728), Part II, p. 155

5. *The Opinions of Women*

For the first time in our long survey we have the opportunity of learning at first hand the educational opinions of women; their views are to be gathered chiefly from contemporary letters and biographies, but were sometimes developed into treatises, like that of Mrs. Bathsua Makin, based on the essays of Anna à Schurmann. The women born in the earlier years of the century held without exception the opinion that girls require a different training from boys, for the reason that 'Education to man or woman is the well-setting out of their natural parts',[1] and a girl's disposition is so ordered that too great knowledge is on the whole a disadvantage to her socially, even to her acquiring a truly religious tone of mind. The second opinion, coming later into prominence, declared that although women were despised for their lack of learning, such contempt was wholly mistaken and detrimental to their usefulness; it owed much to the French school of writers, especially to the *Grand Cyrus* of Mlle de Scudéry. Some illustrative examples may be quoted.

The Mother's Blessing, by Mistress Dorothy Leigh, which in 1621 had reached a seventh edition, contains the counsels of a gentlewoman written as a legacy for her children. She advises that teaching should begin at four years or earlier, and continue till ten; gentleness and patience are essential, for curtness hardens a child's heart and makes him weary of virtue: children of special capacity should be sent to school; those not scholars by nature, having at all events learnt to read the Bible, may be put to some good calling.[2] A treatise, in the same gentle vein, was addressed by Mrs. Elizabeth Josceline, one of the Brooke family of Norton in Cheshire, to her husband before the birth of her first child in 1662, after six years of married life; she felt there was some good office she might do for it 'more than only to bring it forth', and therefore

[1] *Cal. Dom. S.P. Charles I*, vol. cccxvi, 87 (Brilliana, Lady Harley).
[2] Dorothy Leigh, *The Mother's Blessing* (1621), ch. ii, p. 46.

described how, in the event of her own death, she would have it educated:

'If [the child] bee a daughter I hope my mother Brooke, if thou desirest her, will take it amonge hers and let them learn one lesson. I desire her bringinge up may bee learninge the Bible as my sisters doo, good huswifery, writing and good work; other learninge a woman needs not; though I admire it in those whom God hathe blest wth discretion yet I desire it not much in my own, having seen that somtimes women have greater portions of learninge then wisdom w^{ch} is of no better use to them then a Maynsayle to a flyboat w^{ch} runs it under water; but where learning and wisdom meet in a vertuous disposed woman she is the fittest closet for all goodness, she is a well-ballaced ship that may bear all her sayle, she is—indeed I should but shame myselfe if I should go about to prays her more; but, my deare, though shee have all this in her she will hardly make a poor man's wife, but I will leave it to thy will. If thou desirest a learned daughter I pray God give her a wise and religious hart . . . howsoever thou disposest of her educacyon, I pray thee labor by all means to teache her true humilitie, though I as much desire it may be as humble if it bee a son as a daughter, yet in a daughter I more fear that vice, pride beeing now rather accounted a vertue in our sex, worthy prays, then a vice fit for reprof.' [1]

To the same school of opinion belonged Mary Browne, who married the diarist Evelyn in 1647, when she was not thirteen years old, and, after the old counsel of the Reformers, received most of her education from her husband. She read much, with critical appreciation and a native shrewdness, spoke French accurately, understood Italian, and used her native tongue with care and discrimination. Yet she dreaded any over-exalted estimate of her capacities and on one occasion delayed writing to her son's tutor at Oxford because she feared he rated her intellect too highly. Her view of the relation of women to learning is the more interesting since she was herself by

[1] *Treatise of Education*, B.M. Add. MS. 27467. The Treatise was printed in 1684 and again in 1840 and 1852. A pathetic interest attaches to it, for young Mistress Josceline died nine days after her child, Theodora, was born. Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1852, pp. 496, 497.

no means either stupid or ignorant, while her daughters were brilliantly accomplished and held in their own day a position in some degree analogous to the More household.

'Women were not borne to read Authors and censure the Learned,' she wrote, 'to compare Lives and judge of Virtues, to give rules of Morality and sacrifice to the Muses. . . . We are willing to acknowledge all time borrowed from Family duties is misspent: the care of Children's education, observing a Husband's commands, assisting the Sick, relieving the Poore and being serviceable to our Friends, are of sufficient weight to employ the most improved capacities amongst us. If sometimes it happens by accident that one of a thousand aspires a little higher, her fate commonly exposes her to wonder but adds little to esteem. . . . A Heroine is a kind of prodigy; the influence of a blasinge starre is not more dangerous or more avoyded.' [1]

Margaret, the celebrated Duchess of Newcastle, held views characteristically exalted and unpractical about the training of girls, which are described in more than one of her tales. Her own childish upbringing had been less severe than most, without threats or 'lashing with slavish whips', but in other respects followed commonplace lines.[2] She invented a far more original scheme for the heroine of the Contract, in *Nature's Pictures*,[3] a young lady who had passed her childhood with an uncle living in monastic seclusion. From the age of seven he trained her, in Moral Philosophy—to teach her to moderate her passions and rule her affections—in History, 'to learn her experience by the second-hand'; and in the Poets, whose works she not only read but repeated every evening before going to rest. She made a brilliant marriage, but unfortunately, the young Duke, her husband, neglected and despised her. Her uncle remained her friend and counsellor: 'Since I am crossed in thy Marriage,' he said, 'I will strive to make thee a Meteor of the Time, wherefore I will carry thee to

[1] Evelyn *Diary* (ed. 1819), vol. ii, p. 300.

[2] Ballard, loc. cit., p. 299.

[3] *Nature's Pictures drawn by Fancie's Pencil to the Life.* By the thrice noble, illustrious and excellent Princess, the Lady Marchioness of Newcastle, p. 184.

the Metropolitan City for thy better Education, for here thou art bred obscurely, and can learn little.' Accordingly he took her to lodge in London, where, after her singing and music lessons were over, he accompanied her daily to lectures in Natural Philosophy, Physic, Chemistry, and Music, and to the Law-Courts, to hear the Pleadings.

In another tale, 'of Assaulted and Pursued Chastity,'[1] the heroine rejects Romances—because 'their impossibilities makes them ridiculous to reason', and begs her guardian instead for 'Play books or Mathematicall ones'. 'The first', said she, 'discovers and expresses the humors and manners of men, by which I shall know myself and others the better, and in shorter time than experience can teach me'—The study of Mathematics, besides enabling her to number her days by pious devotions, is a key to 'all arts usefull and pleasant for the life of Man, as Musick, Architecture, Navigation, Fortification, Water-works, Fire-works, all engines, instruments, wheeles . . . besides I shall learne to measure the earth, to search the heavens, to number the Starrs. . . .'

Amid these fantastic and capricious echoes of the Duchess's personal tastes, her suggestion of lectures for girls is of some interest. Seven or eight years before the appearance of *Nature's Pictures*, the Dutch adventurer, Sir Balthazar Gerbier, set on foot an academy of learning, on the lines of the earlier Museum Minervae of Sir Francis Kynaston; he himself undertook instruction in all branches of knowledge, and designed a set of lectures on the art of well-speaking, intended 'for the ladies and honorable women of this nation', the first example, it is said, of a popular lecture addressed to women.[2] Whether or not the Duchess availed herself of Gerbier's teaching, in 1662 she published a volume of *Orations of Divers Sorts accommodated to Divers Places*, reprinted in 1668, which contained a section called 'Female Orations'. In it are reported the speeches delivered at a meeting of women who

[1] *Nature's Pictures drawn by Fancie's Pencil to the Life*, p. 224.

[2] Aikin, *Memoirs of the Court of King Charles I* (1833), vol. ii, p. 31.

deliberate on the possibility of combining together to make themselves 'free, happy and famous as men'. The concluding oration philosophically recommends them to be content as they are.[1] On the general question of teaching children the right use of their own tongue, her views are sound. 'They should be taught', she says, 'the purest and perfectest parts of their language, and the most significant words and eloquent speech, that the tongue may get the habit of a good pronunciation as well as the understanding the right and clear sense thereof.'[2]

Midway between two camps, the women distrustful of their own capacities and the convinced feminists, may be placed the educational views described in the little compendium *A Gentlewoman's Companion*, written in 1675 by Mrs. Hannah Woolley. Mrs. Woolley was a much less cultivated and well-bred woman than Mrs. Evelyn but, at the time when her book appeared, she had had thirty years' educational experience, as the youthful mistress of a school of seventy children, as a governess in private families, and as the wife of a free-school usher. She was shrewd, capable, and not a little humorous; she had the detachment born of long experience and thoroughly understood the idiosyncracies and the requirements of her employers. The science of her calling interested her, and she familiarized herself with the theories of other teachers both at home and abroad, such as Mauger, the French grammarian, and Torriano, an Italian master. The comparative neglect of Female Education she deplored; 'man', she tells us, with more vigour than refinement, 'is apt to think we were meerly intended for the World's propagation and to keep its humane inhabitants sweet and clean; but, by their leaves, had we the same Literature he would find our brains as fruitful as our bodies'.[3] Like Mrs. Leigh, she had a dread of severe correction for girls, of sudden blows and loud rebukes, and she illustrates her warnings

[1] *Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle*, ed. C. H. Firth (1886), Preface, p. xxxi.

[2] *Nature's Pictures*, p. 341.

[3] Woolley, loc. cit., Introduction, p. 1.

with examples from her own knowledge as terrible in their inhumanity as those which Erasmus had cited a century before. Although averse from over-severity, she would not be supposed to 'intend thereby over-indulgence, so as to let their tender age rust in sloth and vanity'. She is impressed with the importance of studying her pupils' characters, their dispositions and natural abilities, in order to facilitate their advancement in learning.

6. *Anna à Schurmann and Bathsua Makin*

The writings of Comenius were known in England before 1640: as regards girls' education they were most effective towards the close of the century, through the active discipleship of Mrs. Makin. Mrs. Bathsua Makin, the sister of John Pell, linguist and mathematician, and herself an accomplished linguist, had been governess to the Princess Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Charles I, during the melancholy years of the child's separation from her parents. The name of this young princess must be added to the tragic list of those, like the Lady Jane Grey and Margaret Roper, who found in study their solace in adversity; she loved books, and under Mrs. Makin's tuition worked with a feverish precocity that enabled her, it is said, before she was nine years old, to read and write, and in some measure to understand French, Italian, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.[1] After Elizabeth's death in 1650, Mrs. Makin had apparently other pupils; she speaks with an amusing air of mystery, with 'I am forbidden to mention', and 'if I durst I would tell you', of the Countess Dowager of Huntingdon, proficient in Arts, excellent in Divinity, and a student of Spanish.[2] More important than her scholastic successes was Mrs. Makin's acquaintance with the learned Dutchwoman, Anna à Schurmann of Utrecht. During the years of the Great Rebellion the two were in correspondence, Anna observing critically 'the concussion and shaking of the Commonwealth'. In

[1] Wood, *Princesses*, vol. vi, p. 346.
[2] Makin, *Essay to Revive*, &c., p. 10.

1646 an introduction was effected by Mrs. Makin between the Dutch Blue-stocking and the diarist Simonds D'Ewes.[1] Anna à Schurmann had by this time taken, in the general estimation, a place among the paragons of learning beside the ladies of the Italian and English Renaissance: her linguistic knowledge excelled Mrs. Makin's own, even extending to Persian and Arabian, and she was besides an accomplished poet.[2] In 1659 appeared in London an English translation of her Latin exercise in Logic on the question 'Whether a Maid may be a Scholar'. This rhetorical question she answered in the affirmative; the 'maids' she had in mind were professing Christians and her definition of a scholar was 'one given to the study of Letters, that is the knowledge of Tongues and Histories, and all kinds of Learning, both superiour entitled Faculties and inferiour called Philosophy.' The highest end of study was to help on the understanding of the Scriptures, and the place of 'pretty ornaments and recreations' for a woman was to be taken by mathematics, music, poetry, and painting.[3]

In the main Anna à Schurmann derived her ideas from the Great Didactic of Comenius, but she also refers with appreciation to the writings of Erasmus, her countryman, and with admiration to More's daughters and above all the Lady Jane Grey. Her reasons for claiming scholarship for a girl were in part transcendental; 'she is created with a sublime countenance and erected towards Heaven and therefore ought to give herself to the contemplation and knowledge of heavenly things'; in part she adopts the medieval standpoint; women through inconstancy of disposition are in most need of 'solid and perpetual employment'.[4] Anna à Schurmann takes herself very seriously, like the later Blue-stockings, and is perhaps the first professional feminist, the first to speak of the position of women as their 'cause' and deliberately to seek the support

1 *The Learned Maid, or Whether a Maid may be a Scholar*, London, 1659, p. 48.
2 Makin, loc. cit., p. 12.
3 à Schurmann, loc. cit., pp. 1–5.
4 Ib., p. 8.

of male champions for its advancement. Yet her temerity did not carry her far, and she refused the dedication of a book by one of her allies on the ground that it would arouse frantic envy in the other sex; 'they thinke we are well dealt with if wee obtain Pardon for aspiring to these higher studies'.[1]

A quarter of a century later, when she must have been well advanced in years, Mrs. Makin gave sincere expression to her admiration of Anna à Schurmann by restating many of her ideas in her own 'Essay to revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen in Religion, Manners, Arts, and Tongues', published in London, and on sale at the Bible and Crown in Cheapside in 1673. Like its prototype this essay takes the form of a discussion with an Objector, who has 'no prejudice against the Sex', but who proposes (unless convinced) to bring up his daughters in the same manner as his forefathers had done.

The author states her case against men with considerable fervour, being convinced that the present, that is, it will be remembered, the Age of the Restoration, is a particularly unfortunate time to plead for a revolution in opinion because there is among women of good position not merely lack of learning but also a lack of virtue. 'A Learned Woman', she exclaims sarcastically, 'is thought to be a Comet that bodes Mischief whenever it appears.' In spite, however, of a poor estimation of contemporary society, she takes at once a sane and an idealistic view of the meaning of life. 'We cannot', she says,

> 'be so stupid as to imagine that God gave Ladies great Estates meerly that they may Eat, Drink, Sleep, and rise up to Play. Doubtless they ought not to live thus. . . . Poor Women will make but a lame excuse at the last day for their vain lives; it will be something to say that they were educated no better. But what Answer Men will make, that do industriously deny them better improvement lest they should be wiser than themselves, I cannot imagine.'[2]

As with the earlier Reformers, the aim of education with

[1] à Schurmann, loc. cit., p. 39.

[2] Makin, loc. cit., p. 26.

her is to form character and to set forward true religion, but for this she finds little opportunity in the accepted curriculum of the day.

'Meerly to teach Gentlewomen to Frisk and Dance, to paint their Faces, to curl their Hair, to put on a Whisk, to wear gay Clothes, is not truly to adorn but to adulterate their Bodies. . . . If any desire distinctly to know what they should be instructed in, I answer I cannot tell where to begin to admit Women, nor from what part of Learning to exclude them, in regard of their Capacities. . . . I would not deny them the knowledge of Grammar and Rhetorick, because they dispose to speak handsomly. Logick must be allowed, because it is the Key to all Sciences. . . . The Tongues ought to be studyed, especially the Greek and Hebrew; these will enable to the better understanding of the Scriptures. The Mathematicks more especially Geography will be useful; *this puts life into History*. Music, Painting, Poetry are a great ornament and pleasure. Some things that are more practical are not so material because Publick Employments in the Field and Courts are usually denied to Women.'[1]

Elsewhere in the Dialogue, she develops her argument rather more precisely: 'The great Thing I design', she declares,

'is the knowledge of things; as Religion, the Names and Natures of Herbs, Shrubs, Trees, Mineral-Juyces, Metals and Precious Stones as also the Principles of Arts and Sciences before mentioned. The learning of Tongues is only subservient to these. Was all Learning in English as it is now in French I think those dead languages would be of little use, only in reference to the Scriptures. My opinion is, in the Educating of Gentlewomen greater care ought to be had to know things than to get words. . . .'[2]

These are key-passages to Mrs. Makin's position; she is in the direct succession of the Humanists in her insistence on girls' capacity to learn, on their right to be taught, and on the social as well as the individual importance of their proper education. Her programme, at once more liberal and more adaptable than theirs, making allowance for special feminine aptitudes in languages and

[1] Ib., pp. 22–4. [2] Ib., p. 34.

the arts, bears the impress of Bacon and Comenius. Towards the close of her essay Mrs. Makin was at pains to give an outline of Comenius's system; this she appears to have studied not in the Great Didactic itself but in an English recension referred to as 'the Grammar of M. Lewis', a teacher of her own day. Her application of the new methods in her own school at Tottenham is described in the survey of seventeenth-century boarding-schools.

7. *The Example of France.* (*To the Revolution*)

The long-continued lack of any fixed standards for women's education cannot but strike the reader who carefully follows its history. Always at the mercy of transient fashions and conflicting theories; the plaything of sentiments which, arising in one nation, passed on to excite in another nation, where conditions widely differed, an eager emulation, or an ill-defined emotionalism; a question which touched the usefulness and happiness of one-half human society failed for centuries to reach any conclusion universally acceptable.

The relation of France and England in this respect during the seventeenth century is a case in point. For over sixty years of the century, French women in polite society enjoyed a position of unexampled influence. The contemporaries of the Sieur de Balzac, of Pascal, Descartes, and Corneille, as one writer has remarked, were keeping school simultaneously in fine language, fine sentiments, and fine manners.[1] In the process of fixing the literary language of France, which fell to the task of that generation, the brilliant conversationalists of the Salons shared to the full. 'Quand je dis la cour', writes Vaugelas, in his *Remarques sur la langue française*, 'j'y comprends les femmes comme les hommes, et plusieurs personnes de la ville où le prince réside, qui par la communication qu'elles ont avec les gens de la cour participent à sa politesse. Dans les doutes de la langue il vaut mieux pour l'ordinaire

[1] Rousselot, loc. cit., vol i, p. 208.

consulter les femmes.'[1] Feminine approval had been extended of old to a certain type of knightly virtue and courage; it was now bestowed upon the man who proved himself best able to maintain an admirable balance of intellectual and moral culture—'l'honnête homme'.

Several newly recognized forms of literature, the epistolary, 'vers de société', the Character, the Maxim, sprang from the inspiring intercourse of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, the Samedis of Mlle de Scudéry, or the circle of the Luxembourg. The wave of refinement even reached more distant provincial towns, where too the widespread resentment of women at their up-bringing in ignorance made itself felt. The much-abused term 'preciosity' meant originally a taste for things distinguished, delicate, elevated. The world in which the true 'précieuses' set the tone was not without a grandeur of its own, 'il avait le sentiment de la beauté morale comme le sentiment du vrai'.[2]

If this were the prevailing atmosphere, the particular question of training younger women to enter into an inheritance so tardily acquired was naturally of importance, and the imperfection of existing methods was fully realized. At this time the subject of female education finds its way into the novel, the comedy of manners, all the domain of letters. The *Grand Cyrus* of Mlle de Scudéry, and some twenty years later the comedies of Molière, are outstanding examples. A whole specialized literature springs up round the subject: Du Boscq (*'L'honneste femme'*, 1635), De Soucy (*Le Triomphe des Dames*, 1646), Poullain de la Barre (*De l'Égalité des deux sexes*, 1673), and many another writer, pave the way for the more influential Fénelon and the Abbé de Fleury.

Of all this neighbouring movement what echoes were heard in England, at the Court of the Stuarts, in an atmosphere charged with grave religious controversy, amid the uproar of civil strife?

[1] Vaugelas, *Remarques sur la langue française* (1647), i. 78, iii. 284, &c. Quoted Rousselot, loc. cit., vol. i, p. 208.

[2] Rousselot, loc. cit., p. 220.

French ideas reached English minds chiefly by three channels; through the entourage of a French Consort; through the ministrations of the French refugee schoolmaster; above all through the written word.

When Henrietta Maria came to England in 1625, as a bride of fifteen, her almost complete illiteracy no less than her personal inclinations, made it unlikely that she would exercise much influence upon Englishwomen in the direction of encouraging solid attainments. Her chief claim to talent was a certain lively turn of conversation.[1] The King complained that her French attendants discouraged her from learning the language of her new country,[2] but they did not dissuade her from joining 'as well for her recreation as for the exercise of her English' in a pastoral written by a favourite courtier, Walter Montagu, for the maids-of-honour; the appearance of a woman, far more a queen of England, on the stage in a speaking role was an innovation regarded with alarm and disgust.[3] Here indeed she cast discretion to the winds, redoubling her offence by taking part, for the King's entertainment, in a performance of Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*, and by dancing with the masquers at a grand masque presented by the Inns of Court.[4] Such tastes in the person of a young and charming princess are quickly followed by the appearance of like inclinations in the ranks of society, and a demand arises for the cultivation of any fashionable aptitudes a girl may possess. The vogue of the dancing-masters was assured. At balls in great houses they lead out high-born ladies with an air of insolent confidence; favours were heaped on them and substantial fees enabled them to live in luxury and ride in their own coaches.[5]

The influence of the French schoolmasters was a more important factor in the situation. Being enthusiasts for

[1] Aikin, *Memoirs of the Court of King Charles I* (1833), vol. i, pp. 69–71.
[2] Ib., p. 163. [3] Ib., p. 304. [4] Ib., p. 357.
[5] 'The Character of England, presented in a Letter to a Nobleman of France' (*Somers Tracts*, vii, p. 183).

protestant liberty, and mindful of many an eager girl-pupil, they were convinced feminists, and usually gave to woman the last word, while they mingled piety with a touch of kindly humour. The French grammars which they compiled for use at English schools discussed, in dialogue form, the respective claims of men and women to learning. 'Je voudrois bien savoir', says the heated girl-champion in a Dialogue of M. Mauger, 'si l'on les distingue[1] entre les âmes des bien-heureux dans le Ciel . . . si nous étudions, nous serions généralement plus savantes que les hommes, car, sans Rhétorique, nous parlons plus qu'eux.'[2]

Last and most important was the influence of French opinion on the subject. In French society under Louis XIV one literary form, the Romance, outvied all others in popularity, and women were as always its patronesses, the untiring students of D'Urfé's *Astrée*, La Calprenède's *Cassandre* and *Cléopâtre*, and all their voluminous train.

In England the passion for romance was easily revived, if indeed it had ever languished. Thanks to their French schoolmasters many English women had long since become proficient French scholars: 'I would willingly have the French book you rwite [*sic*] me word of', says a letter of Lady Brilliana Harley to her son at Oxford, 'but if it can be had, I desire it in French, for I had rather reade anything in that tounge then in Inglisch.'[3] Dorothy Osborne had no patience with the translators of Romances, having met two favourites, Polexander and L'Illustre Bassa, so disguised that she, their old acquaintance, was 'scarce able to recognize them'.[4] Translations of French novels were nevertheless welcomed by ladies of less accomplishment, and whether in the original or in English, they never lacked readers. The Queen's confessor was troubled by her insistent preference for Barclay's *Argenis* and *Amadis*

[1] i.e. men and women.
[2] Mauger, *French and English Letters*, 2nd edition, 1676, p. 303.
[3] *Letters of Lady Brilliana Harley*, Camd. Soc., 1853, p 13.
[4] *Letters of Dorothy Osborne*, ed. E. A. Parry (Everyman's Library), p. 15.

de Gaul over the *Life of St. Katharine* or *St. Bridget's Prophecies*.[1] The redactor of a French romance by Vital d'Audiguier, who dedicated his book to Mistress Frances Fortescu and Mistress Elizabeth Duncomb, referred to 'the fashion of this time [1627] which is almost all French'.[2] In a dialogue between an English gentlewoman who is studying the language and a Frenchman, in Claude Mauger's Grammar,[3] the lady explains that she has read *Ariana*, *Polexander and Astrea*, *Lysander and Calista*, and her companion advises her to add to her library the works of Monsieur de Corneille.[4]

The fashion for romance-reading aroused in the scholastic and in the puritanical mind much the same conflict as, in centuries gone by, had enlisted Caxton's sympathy on the side of the knightly hero. Mrs. Makin deplored for girls the waste of time upon frothy romances; but Mrs. Perwich's gentlewomen delighted in 'vain books', and Mrs. Woolley believed that 'Romances which treat of Generosity, Gallantry, and Virtue, as Cassandra, Clelia, Grand Cyrus, Cleopatra, Parthenissa, not omitting Sir Philip Sydney's Arcadia, are Books altogether worthy of their Observation. There are few Ladies mention'd therein, but are character'd what they ought to be; the magnanimity, virtue, gallantry, patience, constancy and courage of the men might intitle them worthy Husbands to the most deserving of the female sex.'[5] No doubt with her accustomed shrewdness she was presenting the popular opinion. This was not, however, unanimous in supporting the novelists. Sir Ralph Verney indeed preferred Romances, and French Romances, to the classics for his god-daughter Nancy Denton's perusal, but Dr. Denton urged Lady

[1] *Cal. Dom. S.P. Charles I*, vol. vii, No. 85 (16 Oct. 1625).

[2] Upham, *French Influence in English Literature*, 1911, p. 320.

[3] Claudius Mauger, *The True Advancement of the French Tongue*, p. 320, ed. 1652, p. 170.

[4] Nor was the fashionable taste confined to women. Sir Kenelm Digby in 1637 was at pains to procure for Edward, Lord Conway, not only the *Quest of the Sang Real* and the *Legend of Sir Tristram*, but a curious *Amadis* in twelve volumes (*Cal. Dom. S.P. Charles I*, vol. cccxliv, 58).

[5] Woolley, loc. cit., p. 9.

Verney to 'leave her Romantz' and study instead a theological work upon Ante-Christ, which he had himself found 'piquante and strangely convincing'.[1] The Duchess of Newcastle eagerly disclaimed the authorship of any love-stories of the popular kind; she knew 'neither the rule or method of romancy writing';

'For I never read a Romancy Book throughout in all my life. . . . The most I ever read of Romances was but part of three books, as the three parts of one and the half of the two others. And if I thought those tales I call my Romancicall Tales should or could neither benefit the life nor delight the mind of my readers, no more than those pieces of Romances I read did me, I would never suffer them to be printed.'[2]

It was no doubt the certainty that ideas ventilated in the pages of a romance would reach a wide and enthusiastic audience which led Mlle de Scudéry to devote part of her *Artamène ou Le Grand Cyrus*, published in ten volumes between 1649–53, to the subject of female education. The book at once became a favourite in England; a translation by F. G. Gent followed closely on the last instalment: in June 1653 Dorothy Osborne was actively circulating the tomes to meet the demands of her circle of friends, and assuring her lover, William Temple, 'the more you read of them you will like them still better'.[3]

In a history of education one is bound to inquire what ideas presented themselves to the girl-readers of *Le Grand Cyrus* in England of the Commonwealth? They were in fact original in many respects and expressed with a striking emphasis. 'A parler véritablement,' says the authoress through the mouth of Sapho, one of her characters,

'je ne sache rien de plus injurieux à notre sexe que de dire qu'une femme n'est point obligée de rien apprendre. Mais si cela est, je voudrois donc en même temps qu'on lui défendît de parler, et

[1] *Memoirs of the Verney Family*, vol. ii, p. 222.

[2] Quoted from a preface to *Nature's Pictures by Fancy's Pencil*, in *The Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle*, ed. C. H. Firth (1886), Preface, pp. xix-xxx. The heroine of one of the tales ('The Contract.) is 'never suffered to read in Romancies nor such light books' (p. 184). Cf. also p. 224.

[3] Osborne, *Letters*, loc. cit., p. 103.

qu'on ne lui apprît point à écrire; car si elle doit écrire et parler, il faut qu'on lui permette toutes les choses qui peuvent lui éclairer l'esprit, lui former le jugement, et lui apprendre à bien parler et à bien écrire.'

Seriously, the passage continues, could anything be more bizarre than the course usually pursued in girls' education? People are anxious they should be neither coquettes nor flirts, and yet they are permitted to study all that appertains to coquetry and nothing that might occupy their minds and fortify their virtue. The reader is not to imagine that the writer's ideal woman is not neat, and does not know how to sing and dance; on the contrary these are delightful accomplishments; at the same time, her spirit as well as her body should have its ornaments, and between ignorance and pedantry there is a via media which can avoid alike impertinent self-satisfaction and annoying stupidity. That middle course is not, perhaps, easy to find. The kind of woman the author is thinking of knows a hundred things of which she makes no boast, has an enlightened mind, a real taste for beauty, a power of accurate expression and some knowledge of the world. One could never brand such a woman with the terrible epithet pedantic, 'une femme savante', because she is clever enough to conceal what some one else inappropriately displays.

To make her distinction between the well-read woman and the pedant still more emphatic, Mlle de Scudéry draws from life the character of the absurd Damophile, who sits up all night to discuss with six or seven astrologers an eclipse of the moon, dresses to represent the Muses, and is portrayed sitting at a large table, laden with books, artists' brushes, mathematical and musical instruments. She talks like a book, uses long words for trifling matters, quotes obscure authors, and takes credit to herself for verses composed by some one else.[1]

The claim of Mlle de Scudéry, on behalf of her sex, to an honoured and assured place in cultivated society—

[1] Rousselot, loc. cit., vol. i, pp. 229–31.

a place in part depending on intellectual achievement, real enough although kept in the background out of deference to public opinion—greatly impressed the more intelligent type of Englishwoman. It discovered to her an intimate connexion between the general contempt for women and their inferior education, and led her to seek a remedy within her own power. The line of thought thus indicated was followed out tentatively in the writings of a pioneer group, Mary Astell and her friends, who came into prominence under Queen Mary II.

Conversation. The crown of the salons was the Art of Conversation, and to learn to talk well an important branch of a girl's studies. The ideas on this subject set forth in *Le Grand Cyrus* were crystallized in a later work, *Conversations sur divers sujets*, written in 1682 and in use as a reading-book by the young ladies at St. Cyr from 1688 to 1690. It is a lively discussion of the secrets of good conversation, of the pitfalls to be avoided, boredom, discursiveness, tittle-tattle, raillery, affectation, and of the power to speak 'always nobly of mean things, very plainly of high things, and very gallantly of gallant things', which results in the perfection of social intercourse. The *Conversations* were 'done into English' by Mr. Ferrand Spence in 1683, but long before this the Art of 'Conference' had taken its place among those accomplishments which served to render a girl 'considerable and lovely in the sight of God and man'. In the boarding-schools, 'those private nurseries properly termed household Academies', or in assemblies confined to women, conversation had a value not to be gainsaid.[1] The subtle Art was best acquired in that finishing stage of education carried out in the establishment of some lady of quality. Mrs. Woolley took advantage of her position as private secretary to learn from her employer courtly phrases and graces, how to express herself becomingly and to manage her tongue with discretion.[2]

[1] Brathwait, *The English Gentlewoman*, third edition, 1641, p. 275.
[2] Woolley, loc. cit., p. 13.

English women needed a long apprenticeship to an art in which the lively Frenchwoman readily excelled, the troubled days of the Commonwealth were scarcely an apt nursery for brilliant talk, and it was not till the eighteenth century that continued efforts bore fruit. A French writer who is supposed to visit England in 1659 gives his impression of the English ladies 'sitting as silent and fixt as statues', or only growing voluble when they can be censorious of their neighbours; they lack entirely 'assurance, address, and the charming discourse of our damoiseles'.[1]

Letter-writing. In the art of letter-writing the English woman of the seventeenth century showed herself an apt disciple, sometimes a critic of French methods. Mary Browne (Evelyn's wife) had no admiration for the style of the Sieur de Balzac, but a high opinion of Voiture, who 'seems to excell both in quickness of fancy, easiness of expression and in a facile way of insinuating that he was not ignorant of letters'.[2] The practice of letter-writing led in not a few cases to successful attempts at autobiography. The interest of this development for our study lies not only in the charm of the letters themselves, but in the degree of culture which they display, the love of books, the power of self-expression, the appreciation of character, all of which presuppose education on far more liberal lines than anything met with hitherto. The *Letters* of Dorothy Osborne, and of Brilliana, Lady Harley, the *Autobiography* of Anne Thornton, Lucy Apsley's *Life* of her husband, Colonel Hutchinson, all were the work of women exceptionally gifted, it may be, but educated in the same way as other girls of their class. As though some spring long pent up had been set free, a little torrent of letters poured forth from versatile pens. About 1620 Sir Thomas Meautys wrote to his sister Jane, Lady Cornwallis: 'I spent som tyme in perusinge certaine letters of myne

[1] 'A Character of England as it was lately presented in a Letter to a Nobleman of France.' *Somers Tracts*, vol. vii, pp. 183 and 187.

[2] Evelyn, *Diary* (ed. 1819), vol. ii, p. 298.

longe sence receved from my good freinds and amongst others I founde some 100 of yo^rs that were rytten beinge a maide, a wyfe and a widdowe.'[1] That prolific authoress, the Duchess of Newcastle, gave to the world CCXI Sociable Letters,[2] in which imaginary descriptions are intermixed with a few letters, addressed to real persons; to her the lines apposite to many of her sisterhood were originally addressed:

> Now let enfranchiz'd Ladies learne to write
> And not paint white and red but blacke and white,
> Their bodkins turne to pens; to lines their lockes,
> And let the Inkhorne be their dressing box.[3]

If the letters are for the most part occupied with family affairs and society gossip, their writers are well acquainted with contemporary literature, with poetry, drama, and romance.

Towards the close of our period there are numerous examples of 'good' letters, pious and voluminous missives written to bereaved friends, to children or god-children in need of sound advice, many of which found their way into print.[4]

8. *Home Training*

Where the Royalist boarding-school was unacceptable to parents what forms of education were available for their daughters? In some cases they made use of foreign schools, which no longer of necessity belonged to some convent. During the religious truce preceding the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, protestant colleges came into being in many provincial towns of France and Switzerland, and protestant teachers freely exercised their calling. Blois had a particularly high reputation; several of the best known French schoolmasters in London advertised their special qualification as being natives of a town renowned

[1] *Private Correspondence of Jane, Lady Cornwallis*, p. 79.

[2] Ballard, loc. cit., p. 302.

[3] *Hist. MSS. Commission*, Tenth Report, App. Part IV, p. 20.

[4] e.g., those printed at the end of the *Holy Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Walker*, *Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Bury*, &c., &c.

for the purity of the spoken language. Two little girls connected with the Verney family, Margaret and Mary Eure, were sent to Blois in charge of their maid to have the advantage of gentle breeding (and incidentally to be touched for the king's evil). Their mother desired that they should be 'tought what is fite for them, as y^e reding of y^e french tong and to singe and to dance and to right and to playe of y^e gittar, if it may not be dangorous for them to cast them areye—';[1] to provide these accomplishments visiting-masters were engaged. A little cousin who accompanied them was placed in a French family.

The practice of boarding out for instruction in manners was still resorted to, especially for orphans and young gentlewomen in poor circumstances. The Court of Aldermen found suitable homes for innumerable 'orphant' wards, the daughters of freemen of the City, remunerating the guardians on a scale of payment fixed according to the girls' fortunes, and showing a paternal interest in their progress, especially in the choice of a suitable husband. The ordinary usage was to educate girls at home. The chief distinction between home-education under the Tudors and under the Stuarts was probably the more general employment of women as qualified teachers, not merely as duennas. The resident governess was sometimes a Frenchwoman.

Two of the best-known educationists, Mrs. Makin and Mrs. Woolley, had experience of the governess's calling; both were women of good ability and considerable acquirements; both regarded their duties as highly responsible and not easy to fulfil adequately. Mrs. Woolley considered that those undertaking this 'difficult employ' should be well-bred, and possessed of an attractive personality. Anything like harshness or over-severity in correction defeated its own object; and the consequences of uncontrolled temper might be injurious to the teacher's reputation but were fatal to the child. In her experience she had known a little girl actually die of shame and grief at her teacher's

[1] *Memoirs of the Verney Family*, vol. iii, p. 66.

severe punishment. Further, a governess must diligently study the disposition of her pupils and accommodate her methods to their natural capacity: 'If she finds any addicted to reading, let her ask the question What she thinks of such a book she hath read? By the answer she may easily conjecture the strength of her Intellect.' Untruthfulness, a very great vice especially if persisted in, must be discouraged, but so, no less, must over-modesty and bashfulness, which may arouse undeserved suspicion of guilt. The pupil's physical, as well as her moral needs require careful attention and heroic remedies.

'Be the incessant tormentor of her sloth, lest by proving burdensome to others she at length becomes so to herself, by which means her understanding starves and her body contracts an Hospital of Diseases. This you may remedy by suffering her not to sleep overlong, lest the spirits be overdull'd as well as by too little rest. If the season be dry walk them in the fields; if not, some moderate exercise within doors will be instrumental in keeping them from the knowledge of the Physician.'[1]

Mrs. Makin addresses herself particularly to the calling of a nursery-governess, who gives little children their first lessons in speech and might often find opportunity to 'improve them in the knowledge of the Learned Tongues before they were aware'.[2]

Such views, trite and commonplace as they may nowadays appear, marked on the lips of these women-teachers a great advance in educational theory, a growth of the pedagogic conscience. Girls educated at home were, however, often placed under tutors for special subjects, their tutoresses confining themselves to instruction in needlework. In this way a certain Mrs. Hannah Senior about 1630 was engaged by the Earl of Thomond at a salary of £20 a year to teach his daughters to use their needle.[3] Jane and Anna Murray (1622–99), whose mother was for a time sub-governess to the Princess Elizabeth, had also a Gentlewoman kept for teaching them all kinds of needle-

[1] Woolley, loc. cit., p. 7.
[2] Makin, loc. cit., pp. 26–8.
[3] *Cal. Dom. S.P. Charles I*, vol. clxix, No. 12.

work. On the other hand, masters were engaged for writing, French conversation, playing on lute and virginals, and dancing.[1] Lucy Apsley (Mrs. Hutchinson), in her unfinished autobiography, says that at seven years old she had 'at one time eight tutors in several qualities, languages, music, dancing, writing, and needlework'. 'My genius', she adds,

'was quite averse from all but my book, and that I was so eager of that my mother thinking it prejudiced my health would moderate me in it; yet this rather animated me than kept me back and every moment I could steal from my play I would employ in any book I could find, when my own were locked up from me. . . . My father would have me learn Latin, and I was so apt that I outstripped my brothers who were at school, although my father's chaplain, that was my tutor, was a pitiful dull fellow. . . . As for music and dancing, I profited very little in them and would never practise my lute or harpsichord, but when my masters were with me; and for my needle I absolutely hated it. Play among other children I despised and when I was forced to entertain such as came to visit me, I tired them with more grave instructions than their mothers, plucked all their babies [dolls] to pieces, and kept the children in such awe that they were glad when I entertained myself with elder company.'[2]

If Lucy Apsley found her clerical tutor but a dull fellow, there were other cases where the office was filled by a poet or man of letters. *Britannia's Pastorals* contain many allusions to the author's tutorial experiences in the family of William, Earl of Pembroke. Samuel Daniel was tutor to the Lady Anne Clifford, afterwards Countess of Pembroke;[3] he also wrote the charming introduction to a favourite girls' lesson-book, a poem 'in commendation of Monsieur Erondel and his Garden', beginning:

> Swift Erondel why hast thou been so slowe
> Whose nature is to bring the Sommer in?
> Why hast thou let the baleful winter blowe,
> Ere thou to chaunt thy native tunes begin?

[1] *Autobiography of Lady Halkett*, Camd. Soc., 1875, p. 2.
[2] *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson*, p. 17.
[3] Ballard, loc. cit., p. 308.

Thy braine replenish't and thy fethers grow'ne
Why is thy worth and worke so long unknowne? [1]

Milton, in spite of his views on women's education, considered 'Mr. Marvile', whom he desired to employ as amanuensis in his blindness, to be 'no doubt of an approved conversation', for he had lately come 'out of the house of the Lord Fairfax . . . where he was intrusted to give some instruction in the languages to the Lady his daughter'.[2] The presence of clerical tutors in private houses,[3] on the plea of the children's education, was regarded with suspicion of papist propaganda, and the Archbishops of Canterbury and York agreed to tolerate them, on the ground of their poverty, only if they held to the Book of Common Prayer.'[4]

The visiting master found employment also in country-places. A vivid picture of home-education in a country parsonage occurs in the biography of Mrs. Elizabeth Walker. Her five daughters were born between 1652 and 1663, when their father, Dr. Anthony Walker, was Rector of Fyfield in Sussex. While the greatest importance was attached to their training in piety,[5] their mother was anxious they should not lack accomplishments; she kept them at home says her biographer, 'not to save Charges but avoid inconveniences; and therefore, that they might not want what she could not perform, entertained a French Dancing Master in the House, and had a Writing and Singing-Master come to them at fit Seasons'.[6]

The passages already quoted give some idea of the

[1] Peter Erondelle, *The French Garden for English Ladyes and Gentlewomen to walk in*, 1661.

[2] W. B. Scoones, *Four Centuries of English Letters* (1893), Letter XX, p. 98.

[3] Dr. Anthony Walker, the husband and biographer of Mrs. Elizabeth Walker, one of Ballard's illustrious ladies, was for three years tutor to Mrs. Mary Lukenor (afterwards Lady Townsend), Dr. Gauden's step-daughter, on Bishop Brownrigg's recommendation. *Life of Mrs. E. Walker*, p. 7.

[4] *Cal. Dom. S.P. Charles I*, vol. cccxxxvii, 19.

[5] Cf. *infra*, § ix, 'Teaching of Religion.'

[6] *Life of Mrs. E. Walker*, p. 18. She also taught them to be notable housewives. Her skill in this respect excited her husband's admiration almost as much as her remarkable piety.

educational ground covered, but one or two points may be emphasized further.

Although the learned languages were generally unpopular, there are indications of some survivals of the Renaissance practice of teaching girls Latin, and even Greek and Hebrew. Sometimes, as with Lucy Apsley, or Mrs. Anne Baynard, it was a serious study; sometimes little more than a delightful pastime. Susanna Evelyn had read 'most of the Greek and Roman authors and poets'.[1] 'I am very pleased', wrote Charles Hatton to his brother about 1698, 'to heare y^t^ not only my nephews but my nieces are so good Latin schollars; and it must needs bee a very pleasant entertainment to y^m^ to coppe verses, of wh^ch^ I doubt not but y^t^ an excellent choice is made before they charge their memory w^th^ them and copping them will fix in their minds several usefull instructions.'[2]

As in the fashionable schools so at home much prominence was given to hand-work. The needlecraft of the moment was cut work and embroidery in gold and silver thread, which finds a place in the Baconic scheme. In the far-famed Solomon's House of the New Atlantis the canopy of the Chair of State was 'curiously wrought with Silver and Silk of divers Colours, and ever the work of some of the daughters of the Family'.[3] Milton's daughters, weary of the drudgery of reading aloud to their father books to them unintelligible in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, Italian, and Spanish, were at last apprenticed to learn a trade by which they could maintain themselves, namely, embroidery in gold and silver and the making of tinsel laces.[4]

The teaching of drawing in connexion with needlework added to its educational value. The publication in 1606 of Henry Peachman's *Graphice*, a manual 'on drawing with the pen and limning in water-colours', which

[1] Evelyn, *Diary*, vol. ii, p. 36.
[2] *Hatton Correspondence*, Camd. Soc., 1878, vol. ii, p. 237.
[3] Bacon, *New Atlantis*, Works, ed. Ellis and Spedding, 1861, vol. iii, p. 148.
[4] Masson, *Life of Milton*, vol. vi, p. 650.

enjoyed great popularity, perhaps helped to encourage the taste for artistic pursuits among women. In 1626 the Painter-Stainers Company of London complained of the increasing number, both of men and women, unauthorized, who drew 'and counterfeited the effigies of great and noble personages'.[1] Drawing-lessons took their place in the home and school curriculum. Evelyn's second daughter, Susanna, who had a genius for needlework, studied design and painting in oil and miniature, and Lord Hatton's daughter, Alice, had a drawing-mistress.[2] The Princess Louise, the daughter of the Winter Queen, possessed a 'rare and extraordinary talent of drawing the Effigies to the Life of an absent Person by Memory only'.[3]

The hours laboriously spent upon works in straw, wax-work, rock-work, moss-work, cabinet-work, bugle-work, japanning, and such ingenuities were indirectly a tribute to Bacon's insistence on the importance of experiment in the properties of matter as well as in mechanical devices.[4] These arts, from the first quarter of the century onwards, were taught in the public girls' schools and by well-qualified governesses and practised by girls in high position, such as the Ladies Anne and Arbella Wentworth, the Earl of Strafford's daughters.[5] Only Mrs. Makin dared to plead for some better employment of time than 'in making Flowers of Coloured Straw and building Houses of stained paper'.[6] Mrs. Woolley's list of accomplishments is perhaps the most complete which survives to illustrate this strange, but not transient, phase of female education. She was able to instruct her pupils in:

'All works wrought with a Needle, all Transparent works, Shell-work, Moss-work, also cutting of Prints and adorning Rooms or Cabinets or Stands with them. All kinds of Beugle-Works upon

1 *Cal. Dom. S.P. Charles I*, vol. xiv, No. 22.

2 *Hatton Corresp.*, vol. ii, pp. 11 and 242.

3 *Numismata*, p. 282.

4 *New Atlantis*, loc. cit., p. 161. 'We have also divers Mechanical Arts which you have not. And Stuffs made by them . . . as dainty Works of Feathers of Wonderful Lustre . . . and many others.'

5 *Autobiography of Mrs. A. Thornton* (*1632*), Surtees Soc. vol. lxii, p. 8.

6 Makin, loc. cit., p. 33.

Wyers or otherwise. All manner of pretty toyes for Closets. Rocks made with Shells or in Sweets. Frames for Looking-glasses, Pictures or the like. Feathers of Crewel for the Corner of Beds.' [1]

The study of music was pursued with no less diligence in the home than at school. *Britannia's Pastorals* immortalize in verse the practising of scales:

> As when a maide, taught from her mother's wing
> To tune her voyce unto a silver string,
> When she should run, she rests; rests when should run,
> And ends her lesson, having now begun;
> Now misseth she her stop, then in her song,
> And doing of her best she still is wrong;
> Begins againe and yet againe strikes false
> Then in a chafe forsakes her virginals;
> And yet within an hour she tries a-new
> That with her dayly paines (art 's chiefest due)
> She gaines that charming skill.[2]

Evelyn's daughters were taken to London for music lessons; Mary the elder studied under two famous masters, Signors Pietro and Bartholomeo: she sang and accompanied herself with a 'thorough-bass on the harpsichord'.[3]

The sense of public duty, already so noticeable in the learned ladies of Tudor times, during the Stuart period found its chief expression in the study of medicine. Sir Thomas More had earnestly wished that his daughter might spend the remainder of her life in studying physic as well as the Holy Scriptures.[4] This, like other branches of study, had benefited by the general tendency to observe more carefully the processes of nature, while to progressive educationists it was commended by Bacon and Comenius. There is scarcely a description of the upbringing of girls at this time which omits all reference to the 'study of Physick'; but those brought up at home had, in such practical concerns, the advantage over the pupils at fashionable boarding-schools. The elder generation, the mother especially, instructed the younger.

[1] Woolley, loc. cit., p. 10.
[2] Chalmers *English Poets*, vol. vi, p. 266.
[3] Evelyn, *Diary*, vol. i, p. 589.
[4] Foster Watson, *Vives*, p. 193.

Nor was this the only means of obtaining the necessary information. Lady Doctors, such as they were, took apprentices.[1] Ordinary practitioners readily gave advice to their would-be colleagues. We read in Mrs. Elizabeth Walker's biography that she was very competent both in 'Physick and Chyrurgery' and acquired her medical knowledge chiefly from her brother-in-law, 'a very able Doctor of the London College', who wrote out prescriptions for her use, and taught her how to proceed in common complaints for the benefit of her poor neighbours. She was also 'very inquisitive of other Doctors, and had many English Books, Rivierius, Culpepper, Bonettus, &c., which she read, not to say studied'. Her medicine chest contained at her death, 'good store of Vomits, Purges, Sudorificks, Cordials, Pectorals, almost all kinds of Syrups, strong and simple distilled Waters, several Quarts of which she left (yea, Gallons of them she used most), which it is a pity should be lost'.[2] She carefully imparted to her daughters her 'secrets as well in Medecine as in Pastry and and Seasoning'.

Some women doctors had a fashionable reputation: John Evelyn supped in the City with 'a gentlewoman called Everard that was a very great Chymist'[3] as a fellow-guest. Obscure country villages had their female practitioners, the herbalist or even the self-styled surgeon. The Life of Lady Halkett (1622–99) gives an admirable picture of a famous Lady Bountiful. From girlhood she studied medicine, and learnt to prepare herbal and other less innocuous remedies.

'In the summer season she vyed with the Bee or Ant in gathering Herbs, Flowers, Worms, Snails, &c., for the Still or Limbeck for the Mortar or Boyling Pan; and was ordinarily then in a Dress fitted for her Still-House, making preparations of extracted Waters, Spirits, Ointments, Conserves, Salves, Powders, which she ministred every Wednesday to a multitude of Poor infirm Persons, besides

[1] See *infra*, p. 299.

[2] Walker, *Life*, loc. cit., p. 177.

[3] *Diary*, loc. cit., vol. i, p. 246.

what she dayly sent abroad to persons of all Ranks who consulted her in their Maladies.' [1]

Her general success, adds a conscientious biographer, may have been due as much to her fervent prayers as to the value of her medicaments, but she was of too great integrity to play the empiric or the quack. Nicholas Ferrar allowed his nieces to dress the wounds of their poor neighbours but, perhaps wisely, forbade them to tamper with the prescription of remedies.[2] Mrs. Elizabeth Bury, whose genius led her, like Bacon, to the study of 'almost everything', studied both Anatomy and Medicine, prompted partly by her own ill-health, partly by a wish to be useful to the poor. She set to work with characteristic thoroughness, and is said to have acquired some skill in diagnosis and to have 'understood a Human Carcase and the Materia Medica better than most of her sex'.[3]

9. *The Teaching of Religion*

Throughout the period of the Reformation and after, great importance attached to the teaching office of the clergy. Episcopal injunctions constantly reflect the anxiety which was felt lest in the general unsettlement the body of the people should fall away from religion. The responsibility of parish and chantry priests was increased by the more widespread desire for knowledge which followed upon the discovery of the printing press. It was now not merely a question of teaching by rote Pater Noster, Creed, and Ten Commandments in English, but actually of teaching their parishioners to read. 'Such as have cure of souls', wrote Bishop Shaxton of Salisbury to his clergy in 1538, 'do henceforth their true diligence to instruct children until they can read English, taking moderately for their labours of their friends which shall be able to pay, which so shall put them to learning.'[4] The

[1] S. C., *Life of Lady Halkett* (1701), p. 56.

[2] *Life of Nicholas Ferrar*, ed. J. E. B. Mayor, 1855, p. 231.

[3] *Account of the Life and Death of Mrs. Elizabeth Bury*, by the Rev. Samuel Bury, p. 6.

[4] Frere, loc. cit., vol. ii, p. 56.

canons of 1571 specially ordered that 'those clergy who were not preachers, should teach the children to read and write', and Archbishop Grindal required a special census of all children, young men and maidens and servants, between the ages of seven and twenty, who were ignorant of the Catechism, and the exhortation of their negligent parents and masters.[1]

It was inevitable that so great an upheaval in religious thought, such years of uncertainty, should have their effect on the great mass of the nation. Certainly towards the close of Elizabeth's reign there was both a decay of learning among the parochial clergy and a growing neglect of those dependent on them for knowledge of the faith. This is all too plainly seen in the numerous Archidiaconal records, which make complaint that the youth of the parishes are ignorant of the catechism, or that the boys are shameful cursers and swearers and cannot say their Creed, or that the required instruction after evensong, Sunday by Sunday, is constantly omitted.[2]

The difficulty of the position was undoubtedly increased by the intensely suspicious attitude of the authorities towards the teaching profession, and the constant restrictions upon teachers' liberty of opinion. During the reign of King James vigilance redoubled: not merely was a schoolmaster bound by oath in respect of his religious tenets, but forcibly provided with manuals of instruction appropriate to the occasion.[3] At the same time the standards of the more educated were undoubtedly rising, and many thoughtful people viewed with alarm the condition of heathendom in which certain sections of the population were living. In 1631 occurred a striking petition of Sir Richard Graham to Charles I. The want of education on the borders of Cumberland, it pointed out, was so great that the poor inhabitants could not say the Lord's Prayer, while their utter ignorance of God led

[1] Frere, loc. cit., vol. iii, p. 258.
[2] Cf. *Canterbury Archd. Visit.*, M.S., vol. i, 1560–84.
[3] *Cal. Dom. S.P. James I*, vol. lxxx, 42 (p. 276).

them to commit every kind of outrage on society, 'insomuch that at the last gaol delivery felons going to be hanged begged that their children might be brought up in the fear of God, the want whereof brought them to that untimely end'.[1]

The orderly teaching of religion, which already but insufficiently met the national requirement, was further dislocated by the trend of thought during the Commonwealth. 'All devotion', in the words of John Evelyn, 'was now placed in hearing sermons and discourses of speculative and rational things.' The Sunday catechizing and instruction in parish churches came to an end entirely, and among the poorer folk a generation grew up without religious principle and 'very ignorant of even the common points of Christianity'.[2] The undermining of their hard-won position, the restraint which the 'usurped power' put upon public worship, was keenly felt by the generality of English churchmen, and they exerted themselves, not least by painstaking instruction within their own households, to give effect to their loyal adherence. After the Restoration the Church again allied herself with the policy of restriction and petty surveillance. In 1662 and 1665 the Acts of Uniformity were followed by stringent orders from Sheldon, Archbishop of Canterbury, enjoining on the bishops a detailed inquiry into the number and character of the free schools in their respective dioceses. His orders are of special interest for our survey, since the required information was to be derived not only from schoolmasters but also from 'all public mistresses of schools and instructors and teachers of young maids or women'.[3]

Nothing in contemporary record is more striking than the immense emphasis laid throughout the upper and middle classes of the community upon the necessity for bringing up children in the knowledge of God and of His Word, upon the personal factor in religion. If much of the

[1] *Cal. Dom. S.P. Charles I*, vol. clxxxii, No. 1.
[2] Evelyn, *Diary*, vol. i, p. 296 (1685).
[3] Cardwell, *Documentary Annals*, vol. ii, p. 274.

teaching given, and the religious books in use, seem to us harsh, narrow, and sectarian, giving but little scope to the sense of beauty, which, especially for the child, is also a sense of the divine, and resorting instead to a species of terrorism, there is much that is wholly admirable, much that bespeaks a resolute and simple faith, an untiring grasp upon spiritual realities, in an age at first of civil unrest and later of relaxed social morality. Above all, there is an unparalleled zest for the intimate study of the Scriptures. The outstanding example, at first mistaken for a dangerous reversion to popish monasticism but afterwards recognized to be an exposition of the Christian Society in miniature, is the Religious Academy of Nicholas Ferrar at Little Gidding. The younger women of the community, brought up by their mother, Ferrar's sister, Mrs. John Collett, were trained, as More's daughters had been, to read aloud chapters in the Bible,[1] and on Sundays called the 'psalm-children' of the neighbourhood to them to repeat without book their psalms.[2] In other respects they were educated in the ordinary subjects, singing, playing, writing, and cyphering; they kept most careful household accounts, 'were curious at their needles and made their scissors to serve the altar or the poor', and practised the art of surgery. Reading aloud by Ferrar's scholars gave the women some acquaintance with history, ancient and modern; while Ferrar engaged a bookbinder's daughter from Cambridge to teach them the skill and art of bookbinding and gilding.[3]

If at Little Gidding religious observance occupied more than its customary share of time, Bible-reading was the general rule in family life. 'My mother's greatest care,' writes Anne, Lady Halkett, in her Autobiography,[4]

'for which I shall ever owne to her memory the highest gratitude, was the great care she tooke that even from our infancy wee were instructed never to neglect to begin and end the day with prayer,

[1] *Life of Nicholas Ferrar*, ed. J. E. B. Mayor, 1855, p. 11.
[2] Ib., p. 30. [3] Ib., p. 231.
[4] *Autobiography of Lady Halkett*, Camd. Soc., 1872, p. 2.

and orderly every morning to read the Bible, and ever to keepe the church as offten as there was occasion to meet there, either for prayers or preaching.' 'For many yeares together, she adds, 'I was seldome or never absent from divine service, at five o'clocke in the morning in the summer, six o'clocke in the winter, till the usurped power putt a restraint to that publicke worship so long owned and continued in the Church of England. . . . '

The autobiographies of Sir John Bramston[1] and of Lucy Apsley reflect the same spirit of sober piety, and examples could be multiplied. Of a Puritan woman, a 'she precise-hypocrite', it was indeed said by a malicious adversary, 'she overflows so with the Bible that she spills it upon every occasion and will not cudgel her maids without Scripture'.[2]

The Bible served as the customary first reading-book for young children, so that they were early familiarized with its text. Mrs. Elizabeth Walker observed 'that many would read commendably in the Bible, where the sentences are shorter, and the distinction of the Verses and frequent use much helped them, who scarce doe it intelligibly in other Books, where the Periods are longer and not so well distinguished'. She therefore introduced her own family to other books of instruction and devotion, and sometimes to 'Useful Histories; as the Book of Martyrs and Abbreviations of our English Chronicles and Lives of Holy Exemplary Persons'.[3] Her choice reflected popular opinion at least in one respect. Next to the Bible, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* exercised an inexhaustible influence. It was included in many a woman's religious library, from the King's daughter onwards.[4] Nehemiah Wallington described his mother, educated in the latter half of the sixteenth century, as 'very ripe and perfect in all stories of the Bible; likewise in all stories of the Protestant Martyrs'.[5] Susannah Perwich made much inquiry after

1 *Autobiography of Sir John Bramston*, Camd. Soc., 1845, pp. 13 and 111.
2 Quoted from Earle's *Microcosmography*, Aikin, loc. cit., vol. i, p. 59.
3 Walker, *Life*, loc. cit., p. 7.
4 Cf. *supra*, p. 232.
5 Foster Watson, *Dictionary of Education*.

the Martyrs as well of ancient as of later days, 'what they suffered for, and upon what occasion, desiring, and resolving if she had lived, to have read over the history thereof'.[1] Of the English Puritan and French Huguenot mothers Professor Foster Watson has remarked that the Bible and the *Book of Martyrs* were to them as the shields which Spartan women handed to their sons when they set out to battle, saying 'With this, or on it'.

In the so-called 'public schools', where the curriculum was intended primarily to develop social attractiveness, religious teaching was not neglected. The French professors, who played so large a part in scholastic life, gave a serious tone even to their books of grammar; they not only discussed the learning of women from the religious standpoint, but one at least, Peter Erondelle, composed a dialogue to illustrate the methods of English and French parents respectively in bringing up their children in religion, and concluded another with a beautiful evening prayer.[2]

There were, indeed, those who viewed with alarm the favourite schoolgirl exercise of taking sermon notes, a pious habit enjoined by the Reformers themselves. The Matchless Orinda, famous in literature, who had read the Bible through before she was four years old, learned at Mrs. Salmon's fashionable school to take down the discourse verbatim.[3] Susanna Perwich carefully wrote out the Sermon and examined her notes when she came home, 'which she would not fail to mend by such help as she could get, either at the repetition in the Family or otherwise'.[4] Sir Ralph Verney, however, would not have his god-daughter Nancy Denton learn shorthand at school, for 'the pride of taking Sermon-noates' had made 'multitudes of women most unfortunate', and he believed it to be as much contrary to the Pauline injunction for them to write as to speak in Church.[5] His criticisms were

1 *The Virgin's Pattern*, p. 24.
2 Erondelle, loc. cit., Dialogue 13.
3 Ballard, loc. cit., p. 287.
4 *The Virgin's Pattern*, p. 22.
5 *Memoirs of the Verney Family*, vol. iii, p. 72. At Strafford's trial a number of

aroused by the advent of women-preachers, highly unpopular with the average Englishman, among the numerous London congregations of Sectaries, from the reign of James I onwards. A lace-woman in Bell Alley, Coleman Street, Mrs. Allaway, was chief of all the 'she-preachers', but she had many imitators.[1] Among them was Katherine Chidley, a Brownist of belligerent tendencies, and author of *The Justification of the Independant Churches of Christ* (1641).[2] Disparaging references to she-clerks are found in many contemporary writers, even in the ranks of the Puritans.

The *Child's Portion* of Ezekiah Woodward (1640) describes the methods used by a typical Puritan schoolmaster in teaching in Christian morals; with no undue modesty the author acclaims the superiority of his book to the treatises of Xenophon, Plutarch, Clement, Jerome, and Erasmus upon the subject of education.

10. *Under the Restoration*

English society, released from civil tumult and unwelcome restraints, had still to pass through a phase of decadence which left a stain hard to eradicate on the fair fame of the English gentlewoman. In France also there was a change, and the attitude of the later generation is well represented in the *Caractères* of La Bruyère. His chapter on women is critical rather than complimentary. He dislikes the artificiality which is too often the nemesis of social gifts highly developed, and anticipates Rousseau in his admiration for the open-hearted address, the simplicity of youth. Women's lack of education, he declares, is their own fault, almost their own choice; there is no edict to prevent their opening their eyes to read. They are firm set in their ignorance, whether owing to constitutional feebleness, indolence of mind, carefulness for their personal appearance, or a certain instability which

ladies, his sympathizers, took notes, 'so many Sempronias with pen, ink and paper in their hands'. Aikin, loc. cit., vol. ii, p. 129.

[1] Masson, vol. iii, p. 49.

[2] Ballard, loc. cit., p. 281.

deprives them of the power to concentrate.[1] Yet another writer, Malebranche, whose work, *La Recherche de la Vérité*, appeared in 1674, faced with more precision the central problem and pronounced judgement upon it; women, owing to their possessing more sensitive brain-fibres are intellectually inferior to men. Malebranche was the first of modern philosophers to give a quasi-scientific basis, at that period immensely impressive, to ideas which had existed for centuries. Ordinarily, he declares, women are incapable of penetrating truths at all difficult of discernment: the outward appearance of things tasks their capacity to the utmost, owing to the agitation produced in their delicate brain-fibres by the most insignificant object.[2] *The Search after Truth* was repeatedly translated into English, and Malebranche had his share in depreciating feminine self-respect to the deplorable level of the next few decades.

Yet more remarkable was the unforeseen effect of the writings of Molière on the problem of women's education. Between 1659 and 1672 the great playwright produced in *Les Précieuses ridicules* and *Les Femmes savantes*, in *L'École des maris*, *L'École des femmes* and *Sganarelle*, a unique series of women's portraits. Through the medium of his art he presented, like Mlle de Scudéry, two theories of feminine education, the obverse and reverse of the medal. A girl should neither be a pedant, like his Armande, nor a simpleton, like Agnès, whose future spouse required in his wife

> une ignorance extrême;
> Et c'est assez pour elle, à vous en bien parler,
> De savoir prier Dieu, m'aimer, coudre et filer.[3]

The educational ideals of Molière, says M. Rousselot, are incarnate in Léonor of *L'École des maris*, in Marianne of *Tartuffe*, and especially in Henriette of *Les Femmes savantes*; 'la jeune fille instruite sans pédantisme, ver-

[1] La Bruyère, *Caractères* (Collection Nelson), p. 151.
[2] Rousselot, loc. cit., vol. i, p. 254.
[3] *L'École des femmes*, Act I, Sc. i.

tueuse sans pruderie, honnête d'imagination, prenant la vie telle qu'elle est.'[1]

Strangely enough, among his own countrymen as in England, Molière's delicate irony was completely misunderstood. It was not the excellence of learning but a foolish pedantry which he ridiculed; yet his pleasantries had results the reverse of those he desired and might well have anticipated; his plays helped in both countries not to raise the standard of female education but to inaugurate a period of retrogression from the very position he intended to strengthen. The learned Frenchwomen of the seventeenth century, almost without exception, completed their education before 1672, when *Les Femmes savantes* was produced; their successors were witty indeed but scarcely instructed; they were careful that what knowledge they possessed should be a knowledge of the world. Once more a tender plant had been, for the time, cut down by the shaft of untimely ridicule.

In England this was scarcely a matter for surprise; the plays of Molière, read in the original by the few, reached the general ear in adaptations which altogether blunted the fine edge of their art, coarsened their delicate charm and turned the very spirit of comedy into vulgar farce. 'We perceive in English writings', M. Taine has written of this phase—and he is considering in particular the English Theatre— 'that French authors are their masters and were in the hands of all well-educated people. . . . French comedy like French politeness becomes their model. They copy both, altering without equalling them.' Vanbrugh journeyed to France to acquire elegance of deportment; Wycherley, in his youth, was sent there to escape the contagion of Puritan opinions. These writers borrowed scenes and characters from Molière but only to degrade them to the level of a tainted imagination:[2] his consummate sense

[1] Rousselot, loc. cit., vol. i, p. 240.

[2] Cf. Taine, vol. i, p. 484: 'If he [Wycherley] imitates the Agnès of Molière as he does in *The Country Wife*, he marries her in order to profane marriage, deprives her of honour, still more of shame, still more of grace, and changes her artless tenderness into shameless instincts and scandalous confessions.'

of form, his philosophy of life is altogether beyond their attainment. The pleasure they produce, again to quote the French critic, 'is only skin-deep; you have seen nothing of the eternal foundation, the real nature of mankind; you carry no thought away; you have passed an hour and that is all; the amusement leaves you vacant and serves only to fill up the evenings of coquettes and coxcombs'. In the hands of inferior writers the women of Molière, the learned women, become mere puppets. Thomas Wright (1693) drew from 'the great Original of French Comedy', his *Female Vertuosos*, dedicated to the Earl of Winchelsea. One of his characters, Lovewitt, is an admirer of 'Platonick Love'; another Lady Meanwell, has 'more Sentences in her mouth than Teeth', and talks bombastically with a 'flood of Latin'. Her husband addresses her as

> My walking University, my puzzling
> Library of Flesh.

She schemes to establish an Academy of Beaux Esprits 'as the Inquisition, a Tribunal without Appeal or Mercy, where with a Sovereign Authority, we shall judge of all Books that come out. No authors shall write well but those we approve of, and nobody pretend to Wit but we and our Friends....' Finally Sir Maurice Meanwell turns against her Ladyship's pretensions:

> 'The Women of Old', he says, 'did not read so much but lived better. Housewifry was all the Knowledge they aspired to; nowadays Wives must Write forsooth and pretend to Wit.... I tell you, Lady, that I will have a Reformation in my House, that this Plague of Wit has infected all my Servants, even my little Boy forsooth cannot turn the Spit now without a Pharamond or a Cassandra in his hand; and if I call for Drink, the Butler brings me a Spenser or a Ben Jonson.' [1]

The disturbance of family life, due to the conditions of war, is a phenomenon our own generation has experienced, and it was very marked in seventeenth-century England. Already in 1659 Dorothy Osborne commented

[1] *The Female Vertuosos, A comedy*, by Mr. Thomas Wright, 1693, Act III, Sc. i.

on 'the folly that possesses the young people of this age, and the liberties they take to themselves'. 'I have the charity', she adds, 'to believe they appear very much worse than they are, and that the want of a Court to govern themselves by is in great part the cause of their ruin; though that was no perfect school of virtue, yet Vice there wore her mask, and appeared so unlike herself that she gave no scandal.'[1] The writer could not foresee the establishment of a Court opening the flood-gates to sweep away the last remnants of decent self-restraint. If her words have a sententious air, those of the great Earl of Clarendon, written about the scenes of the Restoration, are full of despairing bitterness, for the decadence of manners, the confounding of social relationships, is already demoralizing a younger generation. All forms of respect are now discounted as relics of superstition. Children have lost reverence for their parents; parents have neither authority nor any sense of responsibility for their children's education, even for their maintenance. The younger women converse without modesty or reticence; they haunt taverns and eating-houses; or if they are naturally more seriously minded, bestow themselves in marriage on some fanatic preacher or on the Cromwellian soldier who preserves the stern uprightness of an epoch now gone by.[2]

Yet although the subjects of Sir Peter Lely's portraits, the Castelmaines and their kind, represent the degradation of womanhood which shamed the Court of Charles II, 'where every base character grew unchecked to rankness', historians remind us that the vices of Whitehall found no reflection in the home of the country-gentleman. There the upbringing of daughters often became by contrast more strictly circumspect, and the fervour of religion burnt more clearly. Sir Matthew Hale, in his *Advice to his Grandchildren*, and *Counsels of a Father* (temp. Charles II), urged 'a return to ancient order from modern extravagance, dissipation, and idleness'. He would have

[1] Osborne, *Letters*, loc. cit., p. 207.
[2] *Lord Clarendon's Life. Continuation*, p. 21.

young girls read well, but in the scriptures and good books, not in play-books, romances, and love-books, and, for the rest, acquaint themselves with all the points of good housewifery, such as 'spinning of linen, the ordering of dairies, to see to dressing of meal, salting and dressing of meat, brewing and baking, to understand the common prices of corn, meat, malt, wool, butter, cheese, and all other household provisions; to see and know what stores of all things necessary for the house are in readiness, what and when more are to be provided'. Their recreations are to be of the simplest, 'walking abroad in the fields . . . some work with their needle, reading of history or herbals, setting of flowers or herbs, practising their music'.[1] Even among families connected with the Court there were many examples of pure and upright womanhood. At one time the idea was entertained of Evelyn's elder daughter, Mary, becoming a maid of honour; and she went to London in Lady Falkland's company. Her short life ended in 1685, and the portrait which her father draws, in the pages of the Diary, of her 'airs of spritely modestie', her sweet voice, her studious industry and young discretion, more than all her devout and humble mind, comes nearer than any other in the range of the seventeenth century to the ideal of English girlhood. 'Nothing so delightful to her', he wrote after her death, in pride and grief,

'as to go into my study, where she would willingly have spent whole dayes, for as I sayd, she had read aboundance of history, and all the best poets, even Terence, Plautus, Homer, Virgil, Horace, Ovid; all the best romances and modern poemes; she could compose happily and put in pretty symbols as in the Mundus Muliebris, [his own poem.] . . . On looking into her closet it is incredible what a number of collections she had made from historians, poetes, travellers, but above all devotions, contemplations and resolutions on these contemplations, found under her hand in a booke most methodically disposed. . . . Never can I say enough, oh deare, my deare child, whose memory is so precious to me.'[2]

[1] Aikin, *Memoirs of the Court of King Charles I* (1833), vol. ii, p. 50.
[2] Evelyn, *Diary* (ed. 1819), vol. i, pp. 90–4.

11. *Schools for the People*

The inquiry of Archbishop Sheldon, in 1665, which was to be made of public schoolmistresses as well as masters, and of all teachers of young girls, implies the existence of girls' schools in considerable numbers. The schools for gentlewomen have been sufficiently described; but those for the nation at large may be sought at this stage in a new direction.

The Poor Law legislation of Elizabeth, James, and Charles I resulted in the establishment of a definite system of training for 'poor children', by which was meant not only pauper or destitute children in the narrower sense. Often their parents were required to make a contribution towards the cost; but the larger part fell upon the parish rate. Public financial responsibility for education was first acknowledged by a parliamentary grant in 1649, when £20,000 was allocated for this purpose. Local, that is parochial, common funds had become chargeable, as Professor de Montmorency has shown, at least as early as 1561, when the Overseers' accounts of the City of Westminster include the item 'To Bull for teachinge a childe . . . viiid', and he gives numerous instances in succeeding years.[1]

The education provided by public funds was largely technical in character and, in the case of boys, usually led on to apprenticeship. That this technical aspect was fully recognized is well illustrated in the case of the Bluecoat School at Canterbury, where, in 1656, the head master objected to being expected to teach his pupils to read, which he considered waste of his time.[2] Apprentice-

[1] J. E. G. de Montmorency, *State Intervention in English Education*, 1902, p. 191.

[2] City Records, MS. Petitions to the City Council. An early example of rate-aid received by a middle-class girls' school is the grant from the Mayor and Commissioners of Leicester in 1687 of £20 towards the provision of accommodation in church for the gentlewomen-scholars of Mrs. John Angell. (*Records of the Borough of Leicester*, ed. Helen Stocks, and W. H. Stevenson, Camb. Univ. Press, 1923, p. 587, and *infra*, p. 218.)

ship was not, however, applicable to children under nine years and was usually confined in the case of girls to domestic service and a few unskilled trades, such as pin-making and ribbon or linen-weaving. For the younger children 'not of fitt yeares to be put forth, that idleness may not fasten in them', and for girls not yet apprenticed, the practice of starting schools of simple handicraft, spinning, knitting, lace-making was widespread, and undoubtedly owed much to the example of the stranger-immigrants. In larger towns the bridewells or houses of correction had a department for industrial education. A few examples may be chosen to illustrate what appears to have been a common practice all over England. In 1622 certain justices of Norfolk for the Hundreds of Eynesford and South Erpingham ordered that 'poore children be put to school to knittinge and spinninge dames' and the church wardens and overseers of the poor were to pay the school dames' wages where the parents were unable. In Norwich, under an Order of 1630, a 'knitting schoole dame' was to be provided in every parish where there was not one already 'to sett children and other poor on worke'.

Travelling westward, in 1646 the Sheriff of Exeter and others made arrangements with one Katherine, who had expressed her readiness to instruct young maidens in the art of making bone-lace, while in 1653, at the new workhouse in St. Peter's Yard, provision was made for teaching poor maids in industry and education till they could be bound apprentice, and Joan Hernaman was appointed school mistress at a salary of £20 a year, with a servant under her.[1]

In a few large towns, such as London, Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth, and Norwich, hospitals were set up for the relief of the orphan children of poor citizens.[2] In 1631 the original Bridewell Hospital in the city of London, from moneys provided by charitable persons, from rents

[1] Cotton and Woolcombe, loc. cit., p. 164.

[2] Leonard, loc. cit., p. 218, under 39 Eliz. c. 5; cf. *infra*, p. 201.

and revenues of older endowments, and from collections ordered by the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen specifically for apprenticeship, was giving a trade-training to 106 children, boys, and girls: four silk-weavers, two pin-makers, two hemp-dressers, five glovers, a linen-weaver, and a carpenter lived on the premises rent free and instructed the child inmates.[1]

The Children's Hospital at Norwich was erected about 1631.[2] After forty years' experience, in 1675, a special committee was appointed to go into the question of more expeditious methods, 'to continue such ways as be now beneficial for the Girls' Hospital, in setting them a work by spinning of wool on great wheels, and to advise about materials to be provided and wheels bought, as also about a knowing person to teach the girls and what her diet and wages will amount to.'[3]

An early and well-known instance occurred in the foundation in Bristol by Alderman John Whitson (a wealthy merchant of that city married to an heiress, his master's widow), under his will of 1627, of a hospital for forty girls, the daughters of freemen, 'to go and be apparelled in red cloth'.[4] These girls, the 'Red Maids', were indentured to their schoolmistress for seven years, and the latter made what she could out of an allowance of 50*s*. a head for boarding and teaching them, a sum afterwards raised to 60*s*. Her pupils learnt to read and were constantly employed in plain needlework. The practice of farming the pupils' industry by way of providing a salary for their instructress became a distinguishing feature of many eighteenth-century charity schools and led to great abuses.

The advantages of charitable education from this time onwards captivated the imagination of pious and generous persons who no longer sought safety for their own souls in

[1] Leonard, loc. cit., Appendix, p. 351.
[2] *Cal. Dom. S.P. Charles I*, vol. cxci, 54.
[3] Rye, *Notes from two Court-Books of City of Norwich*, p. 139.
[4] Latimer, *Annals of Bristol. Seventeenth Century*, 1900, p. 104.

bequests to chantrey or mass priests, or in the provision of dowries for indigent maidens, but, throughout the country, endowed schools and provided funds for the apprenticeship of poor children of both sexes. From this source alone an increasing number of schoolmistresses must have come under episcopal observation.

Dame-schools, or small proprietary fee-paying schools also existed to meet in some fashion the growing demand for the elements of learning. We hear, in 1634, of a 'Chaplain's school' at Maidenhead where the clerical schoolmaster demanded 3*d*. a week 'for every scholar that learned English only, and for such as learned to write and read or to cypher or learn grammar, 4*d*. weekly'.[1] About the same date, at some alum works at Kirk Leatham (Yorkshire), a certain James Wemyss received £12 a year from the proprietors for teaching their labourers' children.[2] In 1699 we read of the orphan girls of a yeoman farmer, on the borders of Etchingham and Salehurst in Sussex, receiving schooling, at a cost of 'eight shillings & to pence', from a village dame who also made their clothes. The following year, two of them, Sarah and Elizabeth Cowper, had 'ten weeks' skooling' from a writing-master, at a fee of ten shillings, and another schoolmistress taught 'hanna' to read for five-and-forty weeks and received eight shillings.[3] The little school was a feature of village life in many places: Aubrey tells of the boys and girls from country schools in several parts of Oxfordshire who at their breaking-up in the week before Easter, were in the habit of going from house to house with 'little clacks of wood' with which they beat the doors, singing and begging for eggs or a bit of bacon from the inhabitants. Shenstone's schoolmistress (1742) once for all immortalized the 'dame disguis'd in look profound', who guided the tasks of generations of Shropshire children. In one corner of her schoolroom, he showed a glimpse of the little school-

[1] *Cal. Dom. S.P. Charles I*, vol. cclxx, 13.
[2] Ib., vol. cxciv, 22 (p. 81). Cf. vol. cclxv, 38.
[3] *Sussex Archaeol. Soc. Collections*, vol. lxi, p. 61.

girl, anguished at the impending birching, which her brother had earned for looking at St. George's picture on the back of the horn-book when he should have conned his lesson:

> O ruthful scene! when from a nook obscure
> His little sister doth his peril see:
> All playful as she sate, she grows demure;
> She finds full soon her wonted spirits flee;
> She meditates a prayer to set him free:
> Nor gentle pardon could this dame deny
> (If gentle pardon could with dames agree)
> To her sad grief that swells in either eye
> And wings her so that all for pity she could dye.
> No longer can she now her shrieks command;
> And hardly she forbears, through awful fear,
> To rushen forth, and with presumptuous hand,
> To stay harsh Justice in its mid career.
> On thee she calls, on thee her parent dear!
> (Ah! too remote to ward the shameful blow!)
> She sees no kind domestic visage near,
> And soon a flood of tears begins to flow;
> And gives a loose at last to unavailing woe.[1]

[1] Chalmers's *English Poets*, Shenstone, vol. xiii, p. 327.

XIII

INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION

1. *The Apprenticeship of Girls from the Thirteenth to the Fifteenth Centuries*

A STUDY of the position of women in craft and industry during these centuries must, at an early stage, convince the student that a need existed for some form of craft-education. This was either to be obtained within the gilds to which, on the claims of family alone, large numbers of women were admissible, or, as was more usual, with a woman working independently at some trade or 'art'; in the latter case the girl would be subject only to the control of general ordinances governing apprenticeship in her locality; she would also, as a rule, gain less advantage from her years of service than a boy, who could set thereby his foot on the ladder of promotion and win enfranchisement and civic privilege. A girl's goal of ambition was to start in a business of her own; there are cases extant where a too apt pupil excited the jealous fears of her mistress, who took steps to prevent and to ruin a possible rival.

The apprenticeship of girls began to be practised in this country in the earliest days of the system. At least this opportunity was not denied them when, by the growth of trade competition, they became restricted in those home industries in which hitherto their sex had excelled. A story told by Ailred of Rievaulx of a girl, 'socia adolescentula', who worked at skilled embroidery under the direction of a mistress, making gowns for court-ladies,[1] suggests that the adoption of legal forms followed upon a well-established custom.

The system of apprenticeship probably originated during the reign of Henry III or Edward I; a Cotton MS. in the British Museum, dated 1275, states that the formal enrol-

[1] *Vita S. Edwardi Regis*, Lib. II, Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, vol. 195, col. 783.

ment of apprentices' names was required in order that many unauthorized claims to the liberty of the city, based on service, might be refuted. This enrolment was strongly insisted on, and every freeman was bound by oath to enter his apprentice on a paper in the Chamber of the Guildhall.[1] Girl apprentices appear to have been enrolled and released from an early date exactly as were male apprentices. One of the earliest, if not the earliest, extant record of the practice belongs to the same year, 1275, and runs as follows:

'The same day came Roger Oriel, paternostrer and acknowledged a release to Marion, daughter of Cristina de Lymeseye, his apprentice, of a term of seven years, for which she was bound to him for the sum of 14s. to be paid by instalments of 6d. at Easter, and so from term to term, until &c.'[2]

Even at this early date all the ordinary features of apprenticeship are already stereotyped; the indenture, the seven years' term, the premium; it is probable that Marion was not the first of her sex to be bound to a trade.

In 1300 it became necessary to enforce the practice of enrolment even more strictly, and an ordinance was passed by the Mayor's Court to the effect that the names of all apprentices who should not thenceforth be entered on the paper by their master within their first year, should be enrolled in a certain schedule, and be exhibited at the next Husting to the Mayor and Aldermen. Two Aldermen and the Chamberlain were specially appointed to adjudicate on these cases and to receive the fines.[3]

Among the customs of the City of London which Ricart's Calendar alone has preserved, occurs further evidence of a well-established practice of girl apprenticeship. These customs were copied from some book, now lost, which had belonged to Henry D'Arcy, Mayor of London in 1337–8, possibly the Magnus Liber de Chartis et Libertatibus Civitatis known to have existed

[1] Cal. Letter Book D, Introd., viii.
[2] Cal. Letter Book A, fol. cxxxiv b, p. 227.
[3] Cal. Letter Book C, p. 78.

in 1327. The ordinance referring to girl apprentices provides that:

'Married women who employ certain crafts in the city on their own account, apart from their husbands, can take women for their apprentices, to serve them and to learn their crafts, and these apprentices shall be bound by their indentures of apprenticeship to the husband & his wife, to learn the craft of the wife as aforesaid: and such indentures shall be enrolled as well for women as for men.'[1]

This ordinance appears to recognize that the ordinary machinery of the gild as relating to apprenticeship needed to be supplemented in the case of girls, because the majority of the trades in which they were likely to be placed out were women's trades, without organization of the gild-type. The girl was apprenticed to husband and wife jointly, in order to learn the trade of the wife. This did not imply that girls could not be, and never were, bound to trades which were not exclusively confined to women; there is sufficient evidence to the contrary. On the other hand a girl's bond needs careful scrutiny, because it does not necessarily follow that being bound, for instance, to a pewterer, she was to learn the pewterer's craft; probably she would learn that of his wife, a sempstress or silk-woman. The ordinance which placed them under legal supervision of a man and wife should have been a protection to young girls starting out in life. Unfortunately it seems to have opened the door to a good deal of domestic slavery, even for those who were not apprenticed for the purpose of learning housewifery. The necessity for the regulation which Ricart quotes points to a steady increase in the number of women trading as 'femes soles' who required female assistants to develop their business. By an ordinance of 1278 (6 Ed. II) the right to take an apprentice had been limited to freemen of this city; this may have been a further reason for associating husband and wife in the indentures of a girl apprentice.[2] It seems

[1] *Ricart's Calendar* (Camd. Soc., 1872), p. 103.
[2] Cal. Letter Book E, p. 7, note 2.

probable that single women trading had themselves to be enfranchized before the right to take an apprentice could be conceded. A case is recorded in 1397 (20 Rich. II) in which Margery Borham, 'brouderer', then a prisoner in Newgate, was accused of having engaged a certain woman to dwell with her for a term of years, as an apprentice by indentures, *before she was made a citizen*, and contrary to the custom of the city; to increase her offence she refused with contumely to produce on demand her part of the indentures.[1]

References to girl apprentices during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and early fifteenth centuries are by no means so numerous as those referring to boys; and a table of certain early examples may be of some interest. Unless otherwise noted all are drawn from records of the City of London:

[1] Pleas and Mem. Rolls, A 36, memb. 1 a.

	Date.	Name.	Age.	Parent's name and status.	Period and Premium, &c.	Master and Trade.
1.	1275	*Marion de Lymeseye.*	—	Cristina de Lymeseye.	7 years; 14*s.*	Roger Oriel, Paternosterer.
2.	1290	*Alice de Kantabrege.*	—	Henry de Kantabrege.	B.* (?apprentice); 18 years.	Emma de Paris.
3.	1300	*Alice de Thele.*	—	Orphan of William de Thele.	Wardship.	John de Gildeforde to 'maintain and instruct'.
4.	1318	*Margery and Matilda de Halgheford.*	—	Orphans of John de Halgheford.	Apprentices; 10 marks.	Walter de Halgheford and Matilda, his wife.
5.	1341	*Alice de Kemesyng.*	—	John de Kemesyng, dec^{d}, goldsmith.	B. 40*s.* for apprenticeship to a trade.	—
6.	1344	— *Baudry.*	—	Thomas Baudry, dec^{d}; plumber.	B. Custody of mother till marriage or apprenticeship to a trade.	—
7.	1346	*Hawyse Deumars.*	—	Margery, widow of John Deumars.	15 years 'to be instructed by some woman in befitting trade'.	Richard de Herpesfeld, corder.
8.	1347	*Agnes.*	—	John, called de Oxon. dec^{d}; Spicer.	B. 100*s.* to teach her a craft.	—
9.	1349	*Isabella Giles.*	—	Thomas Giles 'de Flet Stret', dec^{d}.	B. 'to maintain and educate in ordine regulari vel opere seculari'.	—
10.	1349	*Amicia Burton.*	—	Thomas Burton, dec^{d}.	B. by her uncle 'towards her marriage or some trade befitting her position'.	—

*B = bequest.

1. 1275. Cal. Letter Book A, p. 227.
2. 1290. Sharpe, *Cal. of Wills, Court of Hustings*, p. 9.
3. 1300. Cal. Letter Book C, p. 81.
4. 1318. Letter Book E, p. 9 (fol. 1).
5. 1341. Sharpe, p. 445.
6. 1344. Sharpe, p. 473.
7. 1346. Riley, p. xlv; Letter Book F, p. 142 (fol. cxix b).
8. 1347–8. Sharpe, p. 498.
9. 1349. Ib. p. 557.
10. 1349. Ib. p. 594.

	Date.	Name.	Age.	Parent's name and status.	Period and Premium, &c.	Master and Trade.
11.	1358	*Matilda de Astwode.*	11 years.	Orphan.	40*s.* out of £10 trust to apprentice her.	—
12.	1364	*Johanna Gosebal.*	—	—	—	Thomas Charlewode, Girdler and Pouch-maker.
13.	1365	*Marion.*	—	—	—	Margaret la Garnystere, embroiderer.
14.	1368	*Alice Catour.*	—	John Catour 'of Redyngge'.	5 years; 13*s.* 4*d.*	Elias Mympe, Brouderer
15.	1373	*Elizabeth de Ramesye.*	—	Robert de Ramesye; fishmonger.	B. 20*s.* for marriage or trade.	—
16.	1375	*Alice Reyner.*	—	John Reyner, cornmonger, deceased.	100 marks for marriage, and 10 marks for 'apprenticeship if need be'.	—
17.	1376	*Agnes Cote.*	—	—	8 years.	William Kaly and Johanna, his wife.
18.	1379	*Alice Skynnere.*	7 years.	one of three orphan daughters of Thomas Skynnere	10 years; 5 marks paid out of portion.	William Lambourne, draper, and Beatrice, his wife, to learn wife's art.
19.	1381	*Elizabeth Forster.*	13 years.	Richard Forster, 'wolmongere', deceased.	100*s.*, 7 years.	John Appelby and Johanna, his wife, to be taught art of 'thredwomman'.
20.	1382	*Leticia Berewyk.*	—	—	£8 10*s.*	Wife of John Curteys of Peterborough.
21.	1382	*Johanna Cope.*	17 years.	Adam Cope, Skinner	—	William Horstone, draper, of Candlewick St. in St. Mildred's, Poultry.
22.	1385	*Johanna* and others.	—	—	—	Elizabeth, wife of Henry Moring, craft of broidery.
23.	1388	*Cristina Priour.*	—	—	Legacy to apprentice (Bristol).	Edith Moleward, widow (? Shepster).

24.	1389	*Margaret.*	—	—	Legacy to apprentice (York).	William Askame (?draper).
25.	1394	*Petronilla Oxwyk.*	9 years.	John Oxwyk, pepperer, deceased (mother living).	—	Thomas Lucas, mercer, and Margery, his wife.
26.	1394	*Johanna Tiddesbury.*	12 years.	John Tiddesbury, skinner.	B. of £40 from uncle.	Committed to her father not to be apprenticed or married without assent of Mayor and Aldermen.
27.	1407	'Apprentice Joan'.	—	—	B. of 'two coverlets of the least value' and five and a half ells of 'Westvale'.	Alice Wodeford (?Weaver).
28.	14—	*Margaret Billinggey.*	10 years.	Roger Billinggey, deceased, 'chesmongere'.	8 years.	Richard and Johanna Osborne, to learn wife's art.
29.	1419	*Apprentice Agnes Pegge.*	—	—	(Legacy) Bristol.	John Goodson, Burgess.
29a.	1414	*Agnes Wawton.*	—	Thomas Wawton Esquire	(indentured.)	Alice Virly.
30.	1416	*Joan Jurdan.*	—	John Jurdan, citizen and tailor.	—	Thomas Herford, 'setter' and Joan, his wife, *purser.*
31.	1416–17	*Agnes Tikhyll.*	—	William Tikhyll, citizen and saddler.	14 years.	William Celler, citizen and wire-drawer to learn trade of *Cardemaker.*

11. 1358. Cal. Letter Book G, p. 105.
12. 1364. Pleas and Mem., A 10, memb. 9 dors.
13. 1365. Pleas and Mem., A 10, memb. 15.
14. 1368. Pleas and Mem., A 14, memb. 5 dors.
15. 1373. Sharpe, vol. ii, p. 157.
16. 1375. Letter Book H, fol. xxxvii; cf. Riley, p. 446.
17. 1376. Pleas and Mem. Rolls, A 21, memb. 8.
18. 1379. Letter Book H, fol. xviii.
19. 1381. Ib. fol. cxlv b.
20. 1382. Ib. fol. cxliii b.
21. 1382. Ib. fol. cxxxvi.
22. 1385. Ib. fol. cxciv b (see Riley, p. 484).
23. 1388. *Great Orphan Book of Bristol*, Wadley, 1886, p. 19.
24. 1389. *Test. Ebor.*, i, p. 130.
25. 1394. Letter Book H, fol. cclxxxix.
26. 1394. Cal. Letter Book H, p. 410.
27. 1407. *Great Orphan Book*, p. 83–4.
28. 14—. Letter Book I, fol. lxxxiii b.
29. 1419. *Great Orphan Book*, p. 104.
29a. 1414. Pleas and Mem. Rolls, A 40, memb. 7.
30. 1416. Ib. A 45, memb. 3 b.
31. 1416–17. Ib. A 46, memb. 1 b.

	Date.	Name.	Age.	Parent's name and status.	Period and Premium, &c.	Master and Trade.
32.	1419–20	*Alice and Matilda Shawe.*	—	John Shaw, Vintner, deceased.	£40 on trust as premium.	Master Peter Chirche, Notary Public.
33.	1420	*Marion Peto* of 'Bristowe'.	—	—	8 years.	John Tapelegh, citizen and grocer, and Alice, his wife, *Silk-womman.*
34.	1422	*Joan Paye.*	—	Thomas Paye of Oxburgh, Co. Norf.	—	Thomas Stowe, tailor, and wife Alice, *Silk-woman.*
35.	1422	*Agnes Snell.*	—	John Snell, Hundred of Hoo, Co. Kent.	10 years.	Anneys Haunsarde, widow.
36.	1423	*Matilda Pynchebek.*	—	John Pynchebek, citizen and skinner.	7 years.	Thomas Joy, grocer and Anneys, wife, *silk-throwster.*
37.	1423	'Yung damselle.'	—	—	—	Alsoun Bostone.
38.	1425	*Margaret Hardelowe.*	—	William Hardelowe, citizen and tailor.	8 years.	John Baron, tailor, and wife Anneys, *brandester.*
39.	1436	*Alice Herward.*	—	Simon Herward, deceased, mercer.	—	Elizabeth Nevyle, widow and *sylke-woman.*
40.	1502 (date of record)	*Ellen Ussher.*	—	John Ussher, of Godmanchester.	40*s.*	Hugh Sander and wife Johanna, 'Craft of Shepstrey'.
41.	*c.* 1490	*Anne Lyde.*	—	John Lyde, of Hindley-upon-Thames.	£10, 4 years.	John Coke, purser, and wife Elizabeth, 'craft of Shepstrie'.

32. 1419. Letter Book I, fol. ccxlvii b.
33. 1420. Pleas and Mem. Rolls, A 47, memb. 46.
34. 1422. Ib. A. 53, memb. 5.
35. 1422. Ib. A. 53, memb. 8.
36. 1423. Ib. A. 55, memb. 8 b.
37. 1423. Letter Book K, fol. xi b.
38. 1425. Pleas and Mem. Rolls, A 53, memb. 1.
39. 1436. Letter Book K, fol. clxiii.
40. Early Chancery Proceedings, vol. x, Bundle 258, No. 6.
41. Ib. vol. iii, Bundle 155, No. 10.

The cases here cited illustrate various features of girl apprenticeship. In some of the earlier, such as that of Alice de Thele, the distinction between wardship with the obligation to instruct, and a formal apprenticeship, is not very clearly drawn. Under the will of John Reyner, Blader, John Bryan, Fishmonger, received ten marks to apprentice his daughter Alice Reyner, 'if need be'; when she married, at an early age, and he rendered account of his wardship to her husband, only 13*s.* 4*d.* a year had been spent upon her teaching, shoes, and 'other small necessaries', such as dressing and doctoring her head.[1] There are many examples of orphan children who are committed to the care of fellow-merchants of their father's to be started in life; the guardianship continues until they are finally 'advanced', often when very young, to marriage.

Although many of these girls are fatherless, they are by no means penniless; some have household goods of considerable value held in trust for them by their guardians; Margaret Billinggey and her two sisters have each a handsome piece of silver plate to come to them on their brother's death, besides £124. 3*s.* 6*d.* in money to be divided between them.

The case of Hawysa Deumars is unusual; she was apprenticed by her widowed mother to a corder, the choice of mistress and a suitable trade for her being left to him.

Johanna Gosebal was enticed away from her master's service by John de Fulham, who was fined 100*s.* for the infringement of a statute protecting pouchmakers from such misdemeanours. A good and skilful apprentice was a valuable asset. Even upon marriage the employer was sometimes loath to break the connexion; thus Agnes Coke was given the choice of continuing in her apprenticeship after she was married or being released on payment of four marks, as she pleased. Margaret la Garnystere lent her apprentice, Marion, to a friend at Southampton, at mid-Lent, to work for her at embroidery till the

[1] Riley, p. 446.

following Easter, but was obliged to bring an action before she could get the girl back again.

The not infrequent legacies to girl apprentices suggest pleasant relations with their employers. On the other hand, the system of apprenticeship was sometimes a cloak for immoral practices and fraud; sometimes the girls were beaten and otherwise ill-used and cheated. A few years before the apprenticeship of Alice and Matilda Shawe, their master, Peter Chirche, had been heavily fined for assisting to get an orphan girl married without licence of Mayor or Aldermen. More heinous was the offence of Alsoun Bostone, condemned in 1423 to stand in the pillory three market days, for an hour each day, being brought thither from prison with 'pypys' or other 'opyn minstralsy'. Her offence was meanwhile proclaimed, namely that she had let to hire for immoral purposes 'a young damselle, innocent of sinne, that was putte to her be wey of apprentishede to lerne hir craft'. A similar complaint was made before Sir Nicholas Brembre, Mayor, and the Aldermen and Sheriffs of London, in 1385, against Mistress Elizabeth Moring, who made pretence of following the art of broidery, and deceived a certain Johanna and others, who were bound to her for instruction.

The difficulty of enforcing the obligation to enrol an apprentice is shown by the frequency with which the ordinance of 1300 required to be re-enacted; in 1392 it was proclaimed in full market at 'West Chepe and Cornhulle' that 'no man or woman take a male or female apprentice unless enrolled within the first year of their term, under penalty of losing their apprentice, and of a fine at the discretion of the Mayor and Aldermen'.[1] In 1413, when funds were required to complete the building of the present Guildhall, amongst other devices to raise money, a fee of 2*s.* 6*d.* upon enrolment, and again 3*s* 4*d.* at the close of the period of service, was imposed upon every apprentice, both male and female, in addition to

[1] Cal. Letter Book H, p. 391.

the old charges.[1] This extra payment probably led to evasion, for again on March 1414–15 a time limit was fixed for all who had contravened the ordinance in the current year: either they must be enrolled within twenty days after Easter or the apprenticeship would be cancelled.[2]

Failure to legalize the apprenticeship of girls who had come up from the country and were living away from home was, obviously, a serious offence. In such circumstances the parents not infrequently took action: in 1368–9 occurred a case against Elias Mympe, a broiderer, who ill-treated his apprentice Alice Catour, daughter of John Catour of Reading, and, contrary to rule, took her for a term of five instead of seven years and did not enrol her name. The master pleaded guilty and Alice's indentures were cancelled.

At the age of fourteen and upwards a girl could bind herself apprentice without her parents' consent. In 1428 Reginald Lightfot complained that Thomas Blounvyle, carpenter, and his wife had 'caused his daughter Katherine, being under fourteen years of age, against her will and that of her father and friends, to be bound apprentice to them, and asked that she should be inspected in court'. The Court summoned Katherine, and deciding that she had the appearance of being under fourteen released her from her bond.[3]

Towards the close of the fourteenth, and early in the fifteenth century there is evidence of increasing slackness and frequent complaints of failure to instruct, as well as failure to enrol. The mistress of Alice Virly left the city and assigned no one to teach the girl her trade. Joan Jurdan's father brought her into Court to complain of her being 'unduly castigated and governed' and all the while unenrolled, by her master and mistress, a purser. The experiences of Agnes Tikhyll were remarkable; her father, a citizen and saddler, complained that she had been, without his knowledge, apprenticed by a certain 'foreign'

[1] Cal. Letter Book I, p. 111, fol. cxxi; quoted Riley, p. 59.
[2] Pleas and Mem. Rolls, A 45, memb. 3 b.
[3] Ib., A 57, memb. 5.

woman, Thomasine March, a widow, of Dorneye, County Bucks., to William Celler, a wire-drawer, for the inordinate term of fourteen years, and that William had left the City, failed to instruct her well, or to enrol her duly. Celler and his wife asked for time to reply, but next day brought Agnes to Court, having meanwhile hurriedly apprenticed her to themselves 'in the art of a Cardemaker', a branch of the wire-drawer's craft which was in the hands of women. Agnes, who was under fourteen, told the Court she had only signed under threat of a beating and naturally would prefer to go back to her father, which she was permitted to do.

The need for enrolment was accentuated by the growing fashion for young people to leave the country-places and take service in town, the reason given being not unfamiliar to modern ears, the excitement of city as compared to rustic life and occupations. The shortage of field labour in many districts after the Black Death made this migration a danger to agriculture. The number of girl apprentices on record who came to London about this time, from considerable distances, Kent, Norfolk, Bristol, and so forth, is an interesting corollary to ordinances and acts placed on Statute books by uneasy legislators. Complaints were evidently made by lords of the manor, and questions asked angrily as to the true status of those who were receiving the franchise of the city. In 1387 the Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council ordained that 'thenceforth no foreigner should be enrolled as an apprentice, nor be received into the freedom of the city by apprenticeship unless he first swear that he is a freeman and not a bondsman'.[1] Parliament in the Act of 1388 carried the matter farther, and decreed 'that he or she which used to Labour at the Plough and Cart or other Labour or service of Husbandry till they be of the Age of Twelve years, from thenceforth shall abide at the same Labour, without being put to any Mystery or Handicraft; and if any Covenant or Bond of Apprentice be from hence-

[1] Cal. Letter Book H, p. 309.

forth made to the contrary, the same shall be holden for none'.[1] Fifteen years' experiment proved this regulation insufficient to correct the evil. 'Infants born within the Towns and Seignories of Upland, whose Fathers and Mothers have no Land nor Rent nor other Living but only their Service or Mystery,' continued, at the age of twelve years or less, to be bound apprentices in the cities and boroughs, 'and that for Pride of Clothing, and other evil Customs that Servants do use in the same'.[2] There was scarcity of labour and the gentlemen of England were greatly impoverished. Apprenticeship in city or borough was therefore, in 1405–6, straitly forbidden to any boy or girl, at any age, whose father had not land or rent to the value of twenty shillings a year at the least. Poorer children were to be 'put to other labours, as their estates doth require'. The penalty was a year's imprisonment and annulling of the covenant. Only one indefeasible right was conceded to all, without exception, the right to set son or daughter to 'take Learning at any manner School that pleaseth them within the Realm. . . .'[3]

As time went on, and probably also as the pressure of agricultural demands was being met through the natural increase of population, this particular clause of the Statute of Apprentices was felt to be to some extent an infringement of the privileges of the City Franchise. The Courts held it sufficient excuse (if the parents of an apprentice were shown to possess less property than the statutory requirement of 20*s*.) that a lad or girl had 'placed themselves out' and affirmed that they were perfectly at liberty to do this.[4] Finally, the Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons petitioned, the property restriction notwithstanding, that every free man or woman should be able to take as ap-

[1] 12 Rich. II, cap. v.

[2] In 1364 we read of a goldsmith, Richard atte Welle, taking oath that he will teach his apprentice, John in the Lane, his craft, and not send him into the country to thresh his corn or do any other agricultural work. (Pleas and Mem. Rolls, A 10, memb. 7.)

[3] 7 Hen. IV, cap. xvii.

[4] Cf. Cal. Letter Book R, p. 87 [Case of *Welles* v. *Claidich*].

prentice the son or daughter of any freeman whatever. The offending clause was repealed 8 Hen. VI (1430).[1]

There is evidence that considerable pains were taken by friends and relatives to find suitable homes and a good standard of instruction for girls coming from a distance. The story of Ellen Ussher is typical. About 1500 John Ussher of Godmanchester consulted his cousin, William Balard, 'Chapelain', because he was 'better acquainted in London, . . . where he might have an honest house of good name and fame that one Ellen, daughter of the said John, might have service for to learn Shepstry work, and her father would give with her, to some good cunning Shepster, forty shillings and to find her clothing'. After the two men had paid a visit of inspection, Ellen was placed out with Hugh Sander and Johanna, his wife, a shepster, who lived on London Bridge, and there she remained till she was married from the house to one Raff Radie, 'Talough chandeler' of London.[2] The advice of the clergy was frequently sought in such arrangements. At much the same period, Master Peter Vavasour, parson of the parish church of St. Edmund-in-Lombard-Street, placed out a fatherless girl, Anne Lyde, who came from Henley-on-Thames, with John Coke, a purser, and his wife Elizabeth, to learn the same trade of dressmaking.[3]

2. *Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*

The records of the sixteenth century show the system of apprenticing girls of all classes to have continued as before, but between 1536 and 1597 the earliest of a long series of acts dealing with the compulsory apprenticeship of vagrant and indigent children introduced considerable modifications.[4]

[1] *Statutes at Large*, i. 477–547.

[2] Early Chancery Proceedings, vol. iv, Bundle 258, No. 6.

[3] Ib., vol. iii, Bundle 155, No. 10.

[4] A City Ordinance of the year 1517 dealt for some unexplained reason exclusively with the enrolment of maidens and women 'in like manner as other apprentices being men-children, according to the ancient rules'. (Journal II, fol. 259 b.)

The influx into many towns of large numbers of skilled craftsmen of foreign origin, owing to religious persecution on the continent, led to various regulations limiting and controlling the apprenticeship of strangers' children of both sexes in the interests of Englishmen born.[1]

The Apprentice Rolls of the city of Bristol, extant from 1532, afford an opportunity of studying some characteristic conditions of girl apprenticeship at this period. In the first thirty years on record, some seventy to eighty girls' names are to be found in the Bristol rolls, a very small proportion of the total number of entries. The periods of service are often extremely long; Agnes Clarke, a fishmonger's daughter, bound for twenty years to learn the trade of mercer,[2] is exceptional; but there are two periods of sixteen years, and twelve, fourteen and fifteen are frequent. Agnes, the mercer, lived in Bristol, but many of the children came from great distances. In view of the lengthy covenant, they must have started life in Bristol when very young, and must often have left their homes for ever. They hail from Worcester, Leicester, Derby, Shrewsbury, Tiverton, Lyme Regis, and Wyke (Dorset), as well as from all parts of Wales.

There is far less variety in the trades taught than may be observed at an earlier date. Housewifery, 'Arte de huswifships', is the most frequent; there are many shepsters ('chepsters') in the roll, bound as a rule to the wife, knitsters, less common than fifty years later, sempsters, pinners, and drapers. One girl, Maria Thomas of Bristol, a hooper's daughter, in 1547 was bound for seven years to Helena Young, widow, vintner, 'in arte de vinttendo';[3] Alice Mayden, a yeoman's daughter, for eight years, to a vintner 'in occupatione de portres'.[4] This last had been for long a recognized woman's calling in Bristol. Two centuries earlier regulations were made for portresses of wool and woollen thread, who were forbidden to carry

[1] *Cal. Dom. S.P. Eliz.*, Addenda, vol. xxiv, No. 67.
[2] Apprentice Rolls, City of Bristol, vol. 1532–65, f. 95.
[3] Ib., f. 379.
[4] Ib., f. 491.

oiled wool for sale on other days than Friday, or to display it in shop windows.[1]

The variety of social position from which the girls are taken is very noticeable; they range from the husbandman's child, no longer bound to the plough, to the country squire's daughter, while almost every occupation is represented.

In 1461, during the Wars of the Roses, the calling of a weaver had been closed to women in Bristol, even to the wives, daughters, and maid-servants of weavers, in the interests of 'divers of the Kynges liege people, likely men to do the Kyng seruis in his warres and in the defence of this his land', who were said to be vagrant and unoccupied.[2] A hundred years later several girls were apprenticed to one George Higgins and other Bristol merchants, 'in arte de tale lame' (for 'de tela lanae').[3]

After 1566 the number of entries referring to girls greatly diminishes, and nearly all are apprenticed to housewifery. A new trade appears in button-making, sometimes combined with silk fringes; in 1607 Dorothea Hasgold, a goldsmith's daughter,[4] heads the long list of apprentices in silk knitting, and the knitting of 'Jarsie'.

Early in the seventeenth century the invention of a silk loom for stocking-weaving threatened ruin to the hand-knitters; but their inevitable fate was staved off for a time; loom knitting was forbidden, Englishmen going abroad to practise it, and the number of girls apprenticed to a dying trade, increased year by year.[5] In 1636–7 Katherine Elliott, the young Duke of York's nurse, petitioned the King for a grant for the sealing of silk stockings, half-stockings, and waistcoats, in order to distinguish the woven articles from the knitted, for which they were often sold at a high price, although not half so good.[6] The trade in silk stockings was, as usual with women's trades, not

1 *Little Red Book of Bristol*, vol. i, 9. 2 Ib., vol. ii, 127.
3 Apprentice Rolls, vol. 1566–92 (folios unnumbered); see under dates.
4 Vol. 1593–1609. 5 *Cal. Dom. S. P. James I*, vol. lxv, 9.
6 *Cal. Dom. S.P. Charles I*, vol. cccxxi, 23.

incorporated and was subject to every kind of fraud.[1] But the machine-knitters had also their rivals; at about this date Canterbury jersey-spinners were complaining bitterly of the import of camel's hair yarn from Turkey and the fashion for cloth woven from it.[2]

For the time being, however, the silk-stocking trade was evidently a flourishing one. One Bristol merchant, Edward Jenkins, and his wife Lucy appear in the Rolls year by year, as taking fresh learners, the employer receiving a premium of 20*s*. and finding apparel from time to time, as occasion shall serve. On these terms Jenkins undertakes to teach Eleanor Collins to knit 'silke stockins' and to make her 'a perfect work-woman'; he is to give her in the fourth and fifth year of her articles two shillings for every pair of stockings she completes, and in the sixth and seventh year, four shillings, by which time her needles must have moved like lightning.[3] The chief thing a girl had to learn, was, apparently, to begin and end a stocking herself unaided; the next, no doubt, to acquire speed.

The ever-present danger that a girl apprentice to some handicraft, however mechanical, might sink into a domestic drudge, was recognized and guarded against by the careful parent. In 1626 Mrs. Susan Beeke, wife of a Bristol tanner, took as an apprentice 'for sempstry work and other things belonging to a servant-maid', a girl called Mary Tristram, a soapmaker's daughter, at a premium of ten pounds, her father paying for her clothes. As part of this agreement the husband, Richard Beeke, covenanted 'not to be without another servant-maid, which most usually shall do his, her, or their household work, that the said Mary may the better ply her needlework'. Accordingly the Beekes took, at the same time, a second girl apprentice, Mary Jordan, a fruiterer's daughter, as hand-maiden; she was bound for eight years and at the completion of her term received an outfit of 'One gowne and two of petticoats and 2 waistcoates, one for working dayes

[1] Ib., vol. cccxxi, p. 22.
[2] Ib., vol. ccclxxx, p. 31.
[3] Apprentice Rolls, vol. 1593–1609.

and thother for Sondayes [i.e. double apparel], two pares of hosen and shoes, 2 aprons, a cople of ruffs and half a dozen of every other sort of lynen apparell'.[1]

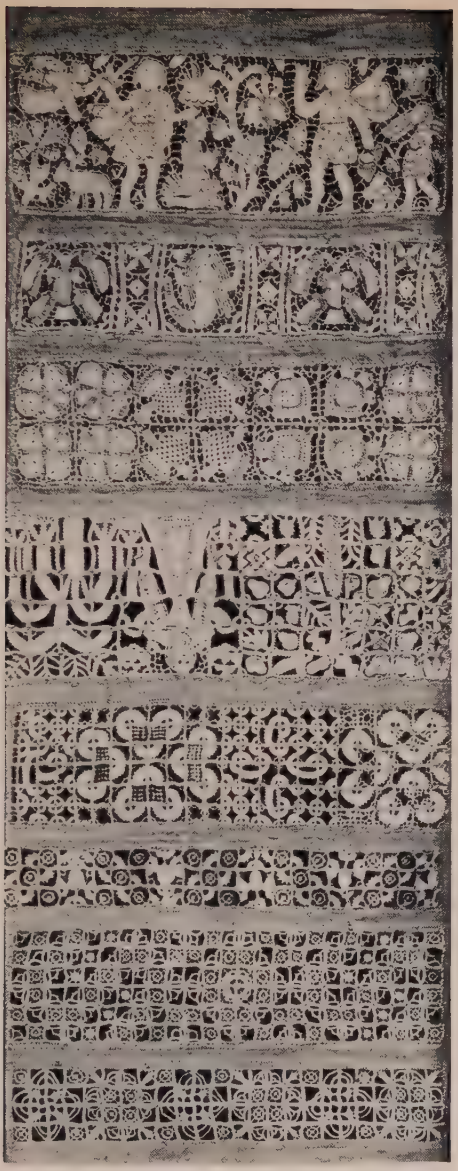
There is evidence of short periods of apprenticeship, two to five years, which seem to have taken the place of a finishing school, and in these cases it is also stipulated that the girl be 'not kept to any drudgery'. Anne Colston, a young gentlewoman, was to be brought up for five years in the art of bonelace-making, working of parchment, and taking out of all manner of laces; also in making all sorts of bands and plain work in sewing with the needle and all other things belonging to a spinster, but not to do 'anie servell worke'.[2] Girls were to be given after their training, a pattern of every sort of lace they had learned to make.[3]

Between 1625 and 1640 there was a steady increase in premiums; £10 and £12 was very usual. For Martha Tristram, apparently a sister of Mary apprenticed to the Beekes, £20 was paid by instalments, for her to learn, during eight years, button-making, the making of pincushions, and sheathes for knives.[4]

The old interest of tradesmen in starting in life the children of their less fortunate brethren is often shown. The premium of an orphan girl, who was to learn fringe-making, was contributed by tailors, a mould-maker, and a shoemaker.[5] The length of service by this date rarely exceeds seven or at most eight years. One Marjory Willard, a barber-surgeon's orphan daughter, was bound in 1634 for seventeen years, to learn sempstery, starching, and laundering, but this is exceptional.[6]

Some effort is occasionally made to provide for the literary, as well as the trade, education of the girl apprentice. A girl bound in 1615 to a schoolmaster in 'sowinge and readinge' is an early example.[7] Katherine Matthews of Monmouth, a gentleman's daughter, put out

[1] Vol. 1626–40, ff. 1 and 2.
[2] Ib., f. 14.
[3] Ib., f. 277.
[4] Vol. 1609–15, f. 117.
[5] Vol. 1626–40, f. 439.
[6] Vol. 1626–40, f. 310.
[7] Ib., f. 301.



XI. A LACE-SAMPLER OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

From an example in the possession of Mrs. Hugh Ford

'Girls were to be given after their training a pattern of every sort of lace they had learned to make', p. 298

in 1630 for eight years, was to learn 'to read the English tongue and to make bonelace of all sorts'.[1] Sara Gwin's employer (1632) covenanted to give her 'time and libertie at sometimes in the weeke for her to learne to reade'.[2] In 1658 Mary Edwards, a sempstress, undertook to instruct her apprentice, Mary Bussell, diligently in the art of sewing and writing, and the indentures bear her signature in a neat hand.[3]

The entries during the Commonwealth are very few, and the payment of premiums almost entirely disappears. After the Restoration the new fashions find a faint echo in these musty records; by 1684 wigs were coming into favour, and Hester Younge, a husbandman's daughter, was bound in peruke-making to Henry Younge, peruke-maker, perhaps a kinsman, on the old-fashioned terms of 43*s*. premium and two suits of apparel.[4] Wig-making was not, however, a new trade for women; the name of Alice Wigemaker occurs in a Leet Roll of Norwich in 1375.[5]

The last entry of the seventeenth century is also one of the most interesting. In 1681 Margaret Page, alias Woolfe, covenanted to teach and instruct Sarah Sanders, a yeoman's child, for five years 'according to her best skill and knowledge, in the art and business of Doctress and Chirurgery, which she now useth, and to find and provide for her all necessaries except clothing'.[6]

[1] Vol. 1626–40, f. 156.
[2] Ib., f. 453.
[3] Vol. 1640–58 (under date 1650).
[4] Vol. 1670–84 (under date 1684).
[5] Tingey, *Records of City of Norwich*, vol. i, p. 382.
[6] Vol. 1670–84 (under date 1681).

XIV

THE GIRLS' CHARITY SCHOOLS

1. *Introductory*

TWO great periods of activity stand out in the annals of English education. The first, the Tudor period, left enduring monuments in grammar school and university, providing a liberal education for youths in all ranks of society. The second, which covered the reigns of the later Stuarts, gave rise to large numbers of schools, intended to benefit the children of the poor, and established not only in great centres of population, but in country towns and obscure villages. In one respect the promoters of the new Charity Schools broke fresh ground. The schools already in existence were sporadic and due to individual generosity. An organized effort was now made for the first time on a large scale to provide education for poor girls in the country-side as well as in large towns. 'A girl', once wrote Sir Joshua Fitch, in a trenchant criticism of the whole movement, 'is not expected to serve God in Church or State, and is therefore not invited to the University or the grammar-school; but she may, if poor, be wanted to contribute to the comfort of her betters, as an apprentice or servant, and the charity-schools are therefore open to her.'[1]

The aim of the present chapter is chiefly to describe the methods of Girls' Charity Schools and to follow the trend of their development: something must however be said about the initial impulse, the remarkable outburst of philanthropic fervour of which they were but one manifestation. This flood of humanitarian emotion reached its height in the reign of Queen Anne, with whose name it is usually associated, but its earlier origins are complex and obscure. The degeneration of public morals which

[1] J. G. Fitch, *Charity Schools and the Endowed Schools Commission*, reprinted from *Westminster Review* for April 1873, p. 10.

followed the excesses of Charles II's reign was regarded with dismay by the more serious-minded men and women. About the year 1678, a group of young churchmen, whose consciences had been aroused by the sermons of certain London preachers, founded, in London and Westminster, the Religious Societies; in 1691 originated the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, which included both Churchmen and Nonconformists, and aimed at putting into effective operation the law against 'Prophaneness and Debauchery'; according to Steele they received 'all kinds of encouragement' from the piety and bounty of Queen Mary II.[1] The inspiration of a common enthusiasm led on in 1698 to the foundation of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, which drew together zealous reformers from all parts of the kingdom.[2] Their earliest efforts were directed to the provision of free day-schools, 'for teaching poor children (whose parents are not able to afford them any education) to read and write and to repeat and understand the Church Catechism':[3] by this means the first Charity Schools came into being in England. Thus far the history of the movement discloses no more than a laudable desire to reform national abuses by educating the young in a pious orthodoxy. But the position is complicated by other factors; other influences were at work which help to explain the extraordinary vogue, even where they had no direct bearing on the origin, of the schools. In the first place many people undoubtedly were convinced that here was a weapon against the ever-present danger of popery, an effective instrument of political propaganda in the hands of the Tory party. The schools in St. Martin's parish in London were avowedly established by the rector, Dr. Tenison, as a counterblast to the

[1] *Ladies' Library* (1714), p. 288.

[2] E. Maclure, *A Chapter in English History, being the Minutes of the S.P.C.K. 1698–1704* (1888), pp. iii, iv. Women were excluded from the Societies' deliberations on the plea of avoidance of scandal, 'to which promiscuous meetings cannot but be liable', and in the conviction that they could better learn their husbands' views, and girls their parents', in the privacy of home. Ib., p. 181.

[3] Ib., Form of Subscription, p. 19.

Jesuit Free School in the Savoy.[1] Another Popish school, set up by the Jesuit Pulteney, led to the foundation, in 1687, of the first Charity School in which Protestant Dissenters were concerned, that in Gravel Lane, Southwark.[2] Learned divines of diverse views were agreed upon the propagandist value of the Charity School, 'as a Fortress and a Frontier Garrison against Popery'. 'How will they stoop to Beads and Latin Charms who have learnt so many plain forms of sound Words in their Catechisms, Psalms, and Prayer-Books', exclaimed Dr. White Kennett, in a rhetorical address delivered on Whit Thursday, 1706, before 3,000 charity children and their friends, in St. Sepulchre's Church. And, he added, 'All our present Charity-Schools, though not opened directly on the same View, yet will serve directly to the same purpose to be . . . a Grace and Defence of our Reformation'.[3] But little insight was needed to suggest the advantage which the attachment of many thousands of young people to orthodox church principles must prove, at least in theory, to the nation and the establishment. Mandeville described the position with characteristic cynicism: if the mask were torn off, he declared, it would be found that the promoters of Charity Schools aimed only at strengthening their faction and inspiring the young scholars with 'a superlative Veneration for the Clergy of the Church of England and a strong Aversion and immortal Animosity against all that dissent from it'.[4]

Yet, again, the attitude towards charitable education remarkably illustrates the mentality of the age. While the aristocracy wasted, to some extent, its moral assets and its substance in riotous living, the Puritan middle classes were gaining a position of enhanced importance, not least in their own estimation, and were highly sensitive on the point of standing and consequence in the social

[1] Cf. Maitland, *History of London*, vol. ii, Bk. IV, p. 1275.

[2] *A Sermon preached for the Benefit of the Charity School in Gravel Lane, Southwark, January* 2, 1727/8, by Samuel Chandler, p. 40.

[3] *A True Report of the Charity Schools* (1706), pp. 36–7.

[4] Mandeville, *Essay on Charity and Charity Schools* (3rd ed. 1724), p. 354.

hierarchy. The gulf between rich and poor has seldom yawned so widely as at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The last traces of feudal privilege had disappeared under various enactments of Charles II and of William and Mary dealing with the liberty of the subject; simultaneously an intense conviction of class prerogative, which had no longer any legislative background, took possession of the better-endowed members of society. An ever-present alarm lest the poor man should forget his subservience by divine decree, to encroach on the privilege, no less God-given, of his richer neighbour, permeates the educational literature of several generations.

This insistent dread required a constant reassurance from learned lips that there was no room for apprehension lest boys and girls in the Charity Schools should be educated above the meanest offices of life; it found solace in the various-coloured coats and kirtles of the 'clothed' children, garments which (in the words of another divine), by making the wearers 'public objects of charity', did nothing to encourage vanity but reminded them continually of their servile rank.[1]

It would be the height of injustice to overlook the pious, unselfish, and generous motives of many a benefactor and founder whose name is written on the long roll of the century. There were not a few who felt with Bishop Gibson that 'no sight was so truly pitiable as Youth growing up in Idleness and want of Discipline, and no Charity so valuable in the account of the great Judge as to instruct the poor and ignorant'.[2] But the record of righteousness is too often overlaid by a petty self-importance, or still worse by snobbery, so gross that the modern mind can scarcely regard it as other than a farcical pose. These conflicting and incongruous ideas jostle one another in the background of the story: all had

[1] Bishop Butler in St. Paul's; quoted *Charity Schools and the Endowed Schools Commission*, J. G. Fitch, p. 5.

[2] *Sermon preached at St. Sepulchre's*, *May* 24, 1716, by Edmund Gibson, [then] Bishop of Lincoln, p. 17.

their share in creating the peculiar atmosphere of true piety, obsequiousness, and commercialism in which the Charity Schools for a season flourished exceedingly, and then for the most part fell slowly into neglect, disfavour, and disrepute.

2. *The Schools*

The first minute-books of the S.P.C.K. (1698–1704) give some idea of the rapid increase of Charity Schools. Early in the eighteenth century began the issue of an annual account, which provided some sort of statistical record of the beneficiaries. From the first the boys, both in London and the Provinces, considerably outnumbered the girl pupils, and the disproportion was never corrected. In 1705 there were 775 girls in London Charity Schools, and 136 had already been apprenticed to some trade on leaving school or placed in domestic service. Five years later the figures had risen to 1,331, and 477 girls in all had been placed out.[1]

From 1720 till 1790 the average numbers in the London schools, which included, for instance, Greenwich and Lewisham, were roughly: boys, 3,500; girls, 2,300; the highest total of schools attained was 180.[2] The provincial statistics are less illuminating. The figures for the school population returned by the Society's agents in the country included many village schools where 'all' the children were said to be in attendance: their totals were added indiscriminately to the boys' total, an arrangement which made the discrepancy between the sexes appear even greater than it actually was.

[1] Total number of schools in 1705, 56; in 1710, 101. The corresponding figures for boys were: 1705, 1,462; apprentices 401; 1710, 2,480; apprentices, 1,118. The apprenticeship figures are always carried on 'from the beginning' and do not represent the annual output.

[2] This was in 1790; the figures are at times somewhat inexplicable, e.g.:

1780: schools 164; boys, 3,544; girls, 2,498.
1785: schools 166; boys, 4,056; girls, 3,546.
1790: schools 180; boys, 3,940; girls, 2,879.

There is nothing to account for the sudden increase of schools coinciding with a decrease in the number of pupils (see *S.P.C.K. Reports*, *passim*).

The earliest returns, for England only, show 1,099 schools, in which 18,136 boys and 2,170 girls were under instruction. In 1730 the figures are 1,318 schools; boys, 19,348; girls, 3,911; and five years later, 1,329 schools with 19,506 boys and 3,915 girls. From this point the country agents evidently ceased to make returns, for these identical numbers are year by year repeated till the close of the century.

The Charity Schools, like the earlier City Hospitals, rapidly acquired a place in popular interest and esteem. The *Spectator*, which gave voice to an enlightened public opinion, bestowed on them unqualified praise, as being 'the greatest instance of public spirit the age has produced'.[1] Queen Anne, whose piety and fervent Protestantism were her most striking characteristic, wrote to Archbishop Tenison in 1711 earnestly requiring him in all ways 'to encourage and promote so excellent a Work and to countenance and assist the Persons principally concern'd in it, as they shall always be sure of our Protection and Favour'.[2]

The practice which Christ's Hospital had instituted long before of displaying the children in their picturesque garb to the popular gaze was imitated by the S.P.C.K. at an early stage. In March 1703 it was mooted in committee 'that the Poor Children in all the Charity Schools might walk in Procession once a year to some Church and there hear a Sermon'.[3] The earliest of a long series of services took place on the Thursday in Whitsun Week, 1704, in St. Andrew's Church, Holborn; the Marshal's men were hired to lead the procession and keep the road clear of carts.[4] Subsequently the place of meeting was moved to St. Sepulchre's Church, and, finally, as numbers outgrew accommodation, to St. Paul's Cathedral. Year by year some leading divine was appointed to preach a charity sermon which should keep alive public interest in the

[1] *Spectator* (1819), vol. iv, p. 248.
[2] Boyer, *Annals of Queen Anne's Reign*, vol. x, p. 221.
[3] *Minutes of the S.P.C.K.*, loc. cit., p. 120.
[4] Ib., p. 274.

schools, and direct the young scholars in paths of loyal churchmanship and virtuous living.

Nor was so admirable an advertisement to be confined to an annual service: other great occasions saw the scholars assembled, all 'new cloath'd' and lustily singing their hymns. On the Day of Thanksgiving for the peace with France, a huge 'machine', a scaffold some 600 feet long, erected in the Strand, accommodated four thousand charity children, boys and girls, in full view of the procession, to the unbounded satisfaction of the onlookers, and the surprise of the foreigners, 'who never had beheld such a glorious sight'.[1]

Another method of keeping the schools to the forefront was the institution of public examinations. The children were examined orally in church by the clergyman of the parish in religious knowledge, and at advertised times, in the schools or some agreed place, by their masters and mistresses, upon the remaining subjects in a limited timetable. An examination for the girls of St. Sepulchre's Charity School was held at Mrs. Norton's in Nag's Head Alley on Snow Hill, the Sunday before every quarter-day.[2] Dr. White Kennett drew a glowing picture of the edifying scene at one of these 'quarterly exercises of Letters and Religion'. Some of the children spell the hardest words

'with more exactness than many Adult Persons can do who yet think themselves Masters of the English Tongue. Some are reading with such an Emphasis and clear Pronunciation as may instruct, if not shame, those Men and Women who come to hear them. Others are making Speeches or holding Dialogues, or by Turns rehearsing some chosen Parts of Scripture, or likewise reciting some particular Clauses in the Acts of Parliament restraining Vice and Immorality. And all with such an Air of Christian Breeding that I perceive gives a wonderful Satisfaction to those Friends and Neighbours who so well spend the Evening of a Christian Sabbath.'[3]

[1] Ashton, *Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne*, vol. i, p. 20.
[2] *An Account of the Charity Schools*, 1712, p. 52.
[3] *A True Report*, loc. cit., p. 10.

The use of an Act of Parliament against Immorality as a text-book for the embryo citizen is characteristic of a safe-guarding system which shaped young children to become cogs in the national machinery rather than living souls for their place in the society of mankind.

One of the first, if not the first of the London Girls' Charity Schools, was promoted in the parish of St. James's, Westminster, in October 1699, by the rector, Dr. William Wake, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, and made provision for a hundred scholars.[1] By May 1700 a subscription of £30 had been raised, and in December a collection amounting to £80 was taken at the church door from the wealthy congregation.[2] Other girls' schools were set up, before the close of 1700, at Lewisham (30 girls), Spitalfields, Whitechapel (40 girls), East Smithfield, Wimbledon, St. Giles-in-the-Fields (50 girls), St. Andrew's, Holborn (40 girls, quickly enlarged to 60), and St Martin's-in-the-Fields (20 girls, clothed).[3] A school in St. Clement's parish was opened in 1702,[4] and in St. Anne's, Westminster (30 girls), in 1704.[5] Archbishop Tenison founded his girls' school in Lambeth in 1706, and in 1713 drew up a set of rules for its guidance which may be taken as typical of such schools at their best and most humane. The school consisted of a schoolmistress, Mary Davies, and twelve poor girls, who remained from the age of eight till full fourteen. Each scholar was to come 'new cloathed', and to be provided with a Bible and a book of Common Prayer. The curriculum included reading, writing, spinning, knitting, plain sewing, and marking. The school hours were: in summer, 7 to 12, and afternoon 2 till 5; in winter, 8 to 12, and 1 till 4. The children were taught to say their prayers morning and evening and 'charged when they go to Bed to say (as in Psalm 4 verse y^e^ 9) I will lay me down, &c.' They attended church, two by two, on Sundays, Holy Days, Wednesday, and Friday, and learned to respond at prayers and to sing psalm tunes. On

[1] *Minutes of the S.P.C.K.*, loc. cit., p. 33. [2] Ib., p. 95.
[3] Ib., pp. 31–127. [4] Ib., p. 196. [5] Ib., p. 271.

Thursdays the school broke up at 3: on Saturdays by way of domestic training the scholars helped to clean the school-house. At Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide they were accorded 'the usual liberties'. The parents were specially enjoined to send their girls to school daily 'in a clean and decent manner, washed and combed', and expected freely to submit them to be chastised for their faults and to 'forbear coming to the School on such occasions that the Mistress may not be interrupted or discouraged in the Exercise of necessary Discipline'. Complaints of too great severity could be made to the Trustees, at their Quarterly Meetings. The children's friends were urged to set them, at home, good examples of soberness and piety, and to call upon them frequently, especially on Sundays, to repeat their Catechism and read the Scriptures. By his will the Archbishop left 'the Picture of my dearest Wife which is now in my Bedchamber' to be fixed up in the School-House[1] as a lasting memorial of her affection and prudent care for the institution. The Archbishop also directed, when his hearse was carried 'two turns about the Palace Yard', that 'the Mistress and the Twelve Girls of my Charity House in Lambeth go next the Chief Mourner . . .', and he bequeathed to the scholars tokens of his kindly interest, mourning rings, gloves, and scarves. The personal touch manifest in these arrangements was here (and elsewhere in the best schools) a saving grace: nothing could go seriously wrong under such constant and affectionate surveillance.

The question of management was, however, a favourite subject of criticism. Mandeville complained that, in the country-side, men of position, good sense, and education were conspicuously absent from the school committees. Apart from a few staunch Churchmen, the promoters were people anxious to retrieve their own credit, 'prudentially' to increase their trade, or to advance their social status. The Governors, he declared, 'are made of

[1] It still hangs in Archbishop Tenison's Girls' School at Lambeth, and has recently been shown to be the work of Mrs. Mary Beale.

the middling People, and many inferiour to that Class are made use of, if the forwardness of their Zeal can but over-ballance the meanness of their Condition . . . there is a melodious Sound in the word Governour that is charming to mean People. . . .'[1]

His remarks probably applied only to schools set up by a group of small subscribers in a town or village. Actually the schools owed their origin and endowments to a great variety of circumstances. Some were controlled by large landowners for the children of their poorer tenants; others, as at Cuddesdon, by the Diocesan,[2] or, as at Canterbury and Salisbury, by the Dean and Chapter of some cathedral town.[3] The University of Oxford maintained a school of 90 girls in St. Michael's parish.[4] At Wingfield (Berks.) 'a Noble Lord' founded two schools, for 20 boys and 20 girls clad in green, and provided a chapel and commodious quarters for the master and mistress;[5] while the Earl of Portland increased the teacher's salary in his school at Gerrard's Cross (for 20 boys and 15 girls) on the understanding that five of his servants might also be instructed.[6] At Winlaton (Durham) four or five hundred workers at an iron foundry allowed a farthing and a half per shilling per week of their wages, which, together with their master's contribution, maintained their poor and provided £7 a year for teaching their children to read;[7] a school for 20 boys and 20 girls of the Foresters was set up at Cranbourne (Berks.) by the Earl of Ranelagh;[8] and one at Kingscliffe by William Law (1727),[9] for 14 girls, under his own supervision. In 1708 the Bishop of Exeter made a strong appeal for the establishment of schools in the West of England. Launceston was the first town to

1 Mandeville, *Essay on Charity and Charity Schools* (3rd edit., 1724), p. 318.
2 *An Account of the Charity Schools*, 1711 [Cuddesdon].
3 Ib., 1710 [Salisbury].
4 Ib., 1709 [Oxford].
5 Ib., 1710 [Wingfield].
6 Ib., 1711 [Gerrard's Cross].
7 Ib., 1706 [Winleton].
8 Ib., 1714 [Cranbourne].
9 J. H. Overton, *William Law* (1881), p. 227.

respond and to set going a school where 48 girls learned to read, knit, sew, and make bonelace.[1]

The Charity Schools everywhere depended largely on voluntary offerings, collections at the church door, or the legacies of well-wishers. A certain number required a small payment from their scholars; at Preston (Lancs.) each of the nineteen girls contributed 1*s.* a quarter;[2] at Shoreham and other places better class parents agreed to pay a rather higher fee for their children's schooling in order to provide a fund for teaching poor children free.[3] Ingenious expedients for raising money were sometimes resorted to; the effigy of a charity child placed at the church or school door mutely invited the passer-by to contribute an alms to the poor-box close at hand;[4] the winnings of a young lady at cards figured in one subscription list,[5] and at Ewhurst the Vicar provided two palls, which he hired out for parishioners' funerals, at 2*s.* 6*d.* and 1*s.* a time respectively, for the benefit of the local Charity School.[6] In some schools a larger subscription carried with it the right of presentation, and it was remarked that such subscribers had 'a particular regard to the children they put in, sometimes giving them diet or taking or placing them out as Apprentices'.

The question of discipline was naturally of great importance in schools intended to improve the national standards of moral conduct. Some of the girls' schools invented disciplinary methods designed to avoid any excess of severity. At Greenwich School, established in 1700, where thirty girls were taught and clothed, the committee of ladies devoted great pains to the children's welfare and earned the confidence alike of parents and employers. They 'wisely judged', we are told, 'that Shame might have a better Effect on the Minds of their own Sex than Fear; and have order'd the Mistress to punish them rather

[1] *An Account of the Charity Schools* 1709, p. 20, and under Launceston.
[2] Ib., 1706 [Preston].
[3] Ib., 1714 [Shoreham].
[4] Ib., 1711, p. 15.
[5] Ib., 1708 [Newland, Glos.].
[6] Ib., 1708 [Ewhurst].

XII. From the Wooden Effigy, painted originally blue and white, of a girl-scholar in the Blue Coat Charity School, Maidstone, founded 1711; now in the Maidstone Museum

'The effigy of a charity child, placed at the church or school door, invited the passer-by to contribute an alms to the poor-box', p. 310

with what may excite their Modesty than their Dread of Corporal Punishment'. For this purpose use was made of a board with seven holes and a travelling peg against each child's name. For obstinate ill-doing a rod was pinned on the child; for 'high crimes' such as profanity, lying, or pilfering, the culprit was dressed up in a fool's coat and made to sit in the middle of the school-room for an hour, a detested punishment. Pilferers were sent publicly in this unsightly garb to ask pardon of the person they had wronged, 'which they do with great Reluctance, but . . . rather do than be turned out of the School'. The severer penalties were seldom required, and the girls' modesty and dutifulness when they went into service was a great recommendation.[1]

In William Law's school a girl had a shilling for saying the Catechism, and sixpence for repeating by heart morning and evening prayer, 'with commendation and exhortation to go on in her duty'. Any girl found lying, cursing, swearing, or stealing from her companions had to 'stand chained a whole morning to some particular part of the room by herself', and then to kneel and confess to God before them all.[2]

In a school at Oswestry, admitting forty clothed girls, a form of competition in learning was devised; 'to put the girls forward'; 'twenty are set to strive against twenty for Shoes; and the twenty that get most of the Exposition and other Books by Heart have Shoes. Then there remain ten against ten, and so on till they are shod all round. A Shift is hung up in the School for the best Spinner, a Head-Dress for the best Sewer, a Pair of Stockings for the best Knitter, a Bible for the best Reader, and a Copy-Book for the best Writer. . . .'[3] Rewards, pecuniary or in kind, for regular attendance, were sometimes provided under the endowment scheme. AtBlewbury (Berks.) each child had an allowance of *6d.* per week for forty weeks in the year; a penny fine was exacted for a day's

[1] *An Account of the Workhouses in Great Britain in the year* 1732 (1786, 3rd edit.), p. 48.

[2] Overton, loc. cit., p. 227.

[3] *An Account*, loc. cit., 1712 [Oswestry].

absence and no excuse accepted, 'by which means the School is kept pretty full without much trouble'.[1] At a small girls' school in Cheshire (Holmes Chapel) each of the ten pupils was allowed a penny loaf of bread on Sunday, to be forfeited by absence and given to the poor.[2] The efforts of the staff were also stimulated by a system of bonuses on results. At Oswestry the mistress was expected to teach her girls 'to read and give an Account of Mr. Lewis's Exposition, and the Abridgement of the History of the Bible by Heart, besides Mr. Turner's Spelling-Book and the Catechism broke into short questions'. For every child who reached this standard she received 7*s.* 6*d.*; and ten shillings for the additional accomplishments of spinning, knitting, and sewing, whether the child was slow or quick to learn.

The selection of mistresses rested with the governors. Teachers of either sex had to be approved by the parish clergyman, and to possess 'a known affection' to the King and the Protestant succession, a grounding in Christian principles, and a definite churchmanship: in character a person of meek temper and humble behaviour, with good powers of self-control, was to be preferred, while a genius for teaching and ability to write a good hand and to understand Arithmetic were important qualifications. The two last, however, could not be exacted from the female candidates, but it was desired 'that all Mistresses of Charity-Schools should be capable of teaching the Children to knit, sew, and spin'. A schoolmistress's salary was extremely small; and her services usually estimated to be worth but half those of a schoolmaster.

At Banbury in 1707 the master of the Blue Boys had £25 salary, the mistress £12 10*s.*;[3] at Colchester (in 1710) the master £30, the mistress £15; at Wakefield, while both teachers had a dwelling-house, their salaries were respectively £21 a year and 2*s.* 6*d.* a week.[4] The mistress

[1] *An Account of the Charity Schools*, 1708 and 1714 [Blewbury].
[2] Ib., 1725 [Holness Chappel (Holmes Chapel)].
[3] Ib., 1707 [Banbury].
[4] Ib., 1707 [Wakefield].

at Archbishop Tenison's school was more generously remunerated; she received £20 a year and 'sat rent free'.[1]

Suitable teachers were never abundant. At Lincoln the difficulty was met by employing clergy-widows in all the four charity schools;[2] at Melbourne (Derbyshire) the excellence of the small school for eighteen girls was due to the zeal of the late clergyman's widow, who 'accepted to be Mistress of the School' and received for her public spirit a stipend of £10 a year.[3] At Dumbleton the school-teaching for both boys and girls was performed by the Clerk of the parish and his wife, 'encouraged thereto by a competent Salary added to the perquisite of his Place'.[4]

It was easier to supply an adequate staff in London and the larger towns, and the Trustees of country schools who could not secure a London teacher wisely sent up their own teachers to be instructed in the methods used in the metropolis. Bath had a specially successful master and mistress, with whom teachers in the near neighbourhood were invited to take counsel.[5] In this way, at least in the earlier years, there was clearly an attempt at keeping up a good standard.

3. *The Labour of Charity School Girls*

Difficulties inherent in the system began to manifest themselves very early in the history of the Charity Schools. In the girls' schools the custom almost from the first had been to encourage a large proportion of handicraft to a very little book-learning. Many schools gave the girls no literary education beyond reading and religious instruction of a stereotyped kind; in others they learnt writing, and even a little elementary arithmetic. The universal trend of female education, and the fact that the girls' destiny was, for the most part, domestic service,

[1] *Rules for Tenison's Girls' School, passim.*
[2] *An Account*, loc. cit., 1707 [Lincoln].
[3] *Methods used for erecting Charity Schools* (14th ed., 1715), p. 26.
[4] *An Account*, loc. cit., 1710 [Dumbleton].
[5] *An Account*, loc. cit., 1711, p. 52.

made the introduction of needlework, knitting, and spinning a *sine qua non*. But the teaching of industrial subjects was soon destined to take on another aspect.

The Charity Schools, as we have seen, depended for support on a fluctuating and often inadequate income derived from voluntary contributions; some other more constant and more abundant source of supply had to be found. Moreover, the practical genius of the eighteenth century thought shame of itself for keeping so many little pairs of hands idle and for bringing together in large numbers the children of those born to toil solely for the purpose of book-learning, even though it were to save their souls. Glittering and fallacious estimates found a way into the pages of *S.P.C.K. Reports*. If ten persons now idle in each of 10,000 parishes were set to work, 100,000 workers for 300 days a year, earning but ½*d.* a day would produce £62,500.[1] In comparison with this magic touch of unceasing labour, the so-called 'idleness and pride' of the charity child invited attack. Mandeville, writing in 1720, put the position crudely: 'In a free nation where slaves are not allowed, the surest wealth consists in a Multitude of the laborious Poor.' Every hour poor folk's children spend at their books is 'so much time lost to society', besides unfitting them when they grow up for 'downright labour'.[2]

To this objection, and others on the same lines, the S.P.C.K. gave a practical response. In 1719 they issued a circular letter to their correspondents entreating them

'to use their utmost Endeavours to get some kind of Labour added to the Instruction given to Children in the Charity Schools; as Husbandry in any of its Branches, Spinning, Sewing, Knitting, or any Employment to which the particular Manufacturers of their respective Countries may lead them; this will bring them to an Habit of Industry as well as prepare them for the Business by which they are afterwards to subsist in the World, and effectually obviate an Objection against the Charity Schools that they tend to take poor Children off from those servile Offices which are necessary in

[1] *S.P.C.K. Reports*, 1737, p. 27.

[2] Mandeville, loc. cit., p. 327.

all Communities and for which the wise Governor of the World has by His Providence designed them.'[1]

In 1720 the Society urged the advantage of hard work to the health of the scholars; 'where in the want of other Labour, the children go a Mile or two to School, even that has contributed to make them robust and active; and Gardening, Plowing, Harrowing or other servile Labour every other day for their Parents has been no Prejudice to their Progress in Learning'.

It is plain throughout this series of letters that by 'labour' was specifically intended work for wages such as had been performed for many years past by children in the Workhouses up and down the country. The two institutions, the one voluntary, the other rate-aided, with the kindred object of keeping poor children from destitution and vagrancy, were in fact converging, and the subsequent history of the Charity Schools shows their gradual absorption into the Poor Law system and closer approximation to Workhouse Schools. This development, affecting as it did the happiness and usefulness of numberless poor girls, deserves somewhat closer study.

Under the Act for the Better Relief of the Poor of this Kingdom,[2] the Corporation of London had, it may be remembered, built and opened, in August 1689, a Poorhouse in Bishopsgate Street. Among the first inmates were pauper children from the several parishes, placed there by the Churchwardens, who paid a weekly 'pension' of 2*s*. 6*d*. (afterwards reduced to 1*s*. 6*d*.) for their maintenance and instruction. The girls had a workroom of their own and a ward over the chapel. In 1732 the occupation of the children, 129 in number, was spinning jersey, on 80 wheels purchased in Old Bedlam for sixteen pence

[1] *Report of S.P.C.K.*, 1747, p. 11 et seq.

[2] 13 Charles II (1662). Professor de Montmorency (loc. cit., p. 193, foot-note), remarks that 'Workhouses have an earlier origin than this Act. By an Act of 1597 (39 Eliz. c. 5), provision was made to enable "Hospitalls or abiding and working Howses for the Poore" to be erected by the charitable. . . . The Act was only to continue for twenty years but was made perpetual by an Act of 1623 (21 Jac. I, c.1), and is still in force.'

apiece. In thirty years over 2,000 apprentices of both sexes had been placed out.[1] The provision of Workhouses rapidly extended through other districts of London and into the country, and in all cases industrial occupation for child-inmates was an outstanding feature. The children's industries varied according to the district in which the institution was placed; at Hanslope (Bucks.) in 1724, the parish children were taught lace-making;[2] at Wisbech they made yarn for the Norwich weavers;[3] at Colchester they spun and carded wool for the bag-makers;[4] at Luton all the inmates, including eight boys and thirteen girls between the ages of 3 and 12, plaited wheat-straw—in a grain-growing district, 'the properest Manufacture to employ the Poor'. The farmers drew the finest straws before threshing and sold them for 4*d*. a bundle; with good management a bundle produced enough straw plait for three hats or bonnets to be sold as 3*s*. apiece.[5] The child labour in this way made available, being cheap, constant and carefully supervised, was sought after by local tradesmen and employment never failed. Thus the Spitalfields children wound 'Bengal Raw Silk for Throwsters', and contrived to earn £70 a year:[6] at St. Dunstan's-in-the-West they spun mop yarn for a turner in the parish.[7] The records of these Workhouse Schools between 1724–32 are full, and they show a close co-operation with the Charity Schools, which tended at least to provide the elements of education. The Workhouse children of St. Dunstan's spun wool only in their leisure time, and nearly all attended the parish Charity School; 20 children went at certain hours from the Workhouse near Christ's Hospital to the Charity School of Farringdon Ward Within;[8] children from St. Martin Vintry Workhouse attended daily the Charity School of Cordwainers' Ward.[9] The Trustees of the Grey Coat Hospital had an agreement

[1] *An Account of the Workhouses in Great Britain in the year* 1732 (1786, 3rd ed.), p. 4.
[2] Ib., p. 95. [3] Ib., p. 100. [4] Ib., p. 108. [5] Ib., p. 82.
[6] Ib., p. 24. [7] Ib., p. 25. [8] Ib., p. 23. [9] Ib., p. 65.

with the Vestry of St. Margaret's Westminster for teaching and employing, at the same time as the children of the Charity, the parish children, who brought their 'pensions' into the scheme. The Grey Coat Girls' School was opened in 1700, a later institution than the Boys' School, and the girls were taught to spin yarn, their handiwork being exposed for sale to the weavers on a hired stall in Spitalfields.[1]

Examples in London could be multiplied, and the same relation between voluntary and rate-provided institutions obtained in the provinces. The thirteen children, boys and girls, in the Workhouse at St. Paul's, Bedford (1724), were occupied in spinning jersey for local drapers; *before they were old enough to work* they were sent to the Charity Schools and taught to read;[2] at Stockport the Charity School was actually joined to the Workhouse (1731).[3] The account of Strood (Kent) is particularly explicit. There, too, Charity School and Workhouse were annexed; the arrangement was considered a great advantage to the charity children, because the money saved in rent by holding the school on Workhouse premises enabled them to be put to good trades, while they earned for themselves 2*d.* or 3*d.* a day by spinning, earnings which the parish children paid over for their own maintenance: on the other hand, the parish children gained the advantage of 'good Instruction with their Labour' and were allowed time off daily for learning. There was a special rule requiring a roll-call of charity children taught in the Workhouse to be taken twice daily, and the usual weekly bills reporting on their conduct were laid before the Governors.[4] This implies that a distinction was still observed between the two classes of pupils.

The case of Artleborough [Irthlingborough] is also noteworthy, for there the town appears to have reaped where it had sown nothing in the way of grants from public funds.

[1] Ib., p. 65, and *An Old Westminster Endowment*, E. S. Grey, p. 45.
[2] *An Account of Workhouses*, p. 82.
[3] Ib., p. 102.
[4] Ib., p. 135.

The school began in 1705 as a charity intended only for teaching a few children to read, but within ten years it had become to all intents a school of industry. The mistress began her industrial training by teaching her pupils to spin and knit, taking the profits of their labour by way of fee. As the numbers grew she took only 2*d.* a week of each spinner's earnings, 1½*d.* a week from the knitters, and 1*d.* from those who learned to read; later on, to assist the children, two benefactors undertook the payment of all the pence the mistress was entitled to; and a penny a week only was now deducted to pay for each spinner's wheel and reel, which they took away with them on leaving school. The children could earn, according to their diligence, from 1*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* a week; the parents, greedy for their pence, sent them to school in summer from 5 or 6 in the morning till 8 or 9 at night; in winter from 6 or 7 till 8 at night, allowing them little intermission for a meal. Every two weeks a supply of jersey and yarn was brought from Northampton and Wellingborough and the earnings were paid; the yarn spun was taken to Coventry to be made into serges and 'Shalloons'. To complete the resemblance of the school to a miniature factory, about 1715 some public-spirited person 'built a large House which will hold on 2 floors 56 wheels, so contrived that the Mistress might see both Floors at the same time and direct all the spinners at pleasure'. Indoor labour was occasionally varied by field-work. On some day after harvest the children were taken to the beanfields where they gathered and laid in heaps enough bean-stubble for their winter fuel, which the farmers, at their leisure, carried to the school-house free of charge. £20 a year was contributed by local subscribers to the upkeep of the school and the profits of the children's work amounted to £500 or £600 a year which was 'a benefit to the town', presumably by relieving the rates. In 1725 sixty charity children were in attendance and forty others whose parents paid a small fee: but apparently none were directly chargeable to the Poor Law.[1] In other

[1] *An Account of Workhouses*, p. 155.

places, however, the claim of Charity Schools on rate-aid was an accepted principle, and contributions varying in amount were made towards their upkeep. At York and Newcastle free house-room was provided by the Corporation;[1] at Leeds the same body gave 'a convenient and large House (formerly designed for a Work-House)', for a school, and also a month's assessment for repairing and fitting it 'for the Harbouring of the Poor Children'.[2] At Newbury (Berks.) the Corporation settled £40 a year on the Charity School, in addition to subscriptions, the Mayor, Minister, and three of the Corporation acting as Trustees; and at Stamford (Lincs.) the Charity School, where the children spun jersey and sold their work, was subsidized to the extent of £20 a year for three years.[3] At the school for fifty girls in the parish of St. Martin's, Oxford, set up by the Corporation, the expense was met 'by the Advancement of Half a Poor's Rate yearly for ten years to come'.[4] It may be said, and truly, that schools of this kind were not really Charity Schools, but they were classed in that category by their promoters, and the dividing line between them and the children's section of the Parish Workhouse became hardly distinguishable.

4. *The Placing Out of Charity School Girls*

The S.P.C.K. regarded from the first an essential duty of the Charity Schools to be the starting in life of their adoptive children, either in service or by apprenticeship. Their Society's Records, as we have observed, supplied each year some kind of leaving statistics, and these show that for the London and suburban schools the number of girls placed in service greatly exceeded those who were apprenticed. As, however, the 'apprenticing' of pauper girls implied not so much a training in industry as boarding-out in a household, and employment in housewifery, in return for maintenance, the difference between the two

[1] Ib., *An Account of Charity Schools*, York, 1705; Newcastle, 1706.
[2] Ib., Leeds, 1706.
[3] Ib., Stamford (Lincs.), 1705.
[4] Ib., Oxford, 1709.

methods was often one in name only. 'Service' did not carry with it the payment of a premium, often a root of evil, and it had not the stigma which compulsion to employ and the practice of 'dumping' children on parishes which had no legal responsibility to support them[1] had brought upon pauper apprenticeship. Apprenticeship was far too well established in the estimation, even of philanthropists, for its use or abuse to arouse at the outset any serious question in the minds of Charity School Governors. Numerous bequests for apprenticing poor children were made during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; it was the accepted entrance-door into wage-earning life for the Charity child. Charity Trustees had not indeed behind them the authority of the Poor Law in apprenticing their girls; they could invite but could not compel employment. On the other hand it may be questioned if they had, in all cases, sufficient voluntary funds to pay the small premium which for the State-aided child was available out of the rates. On the whole the mistresses they secured were likely to be of an even less eligible kind. There are indications of some attempt to supervise girls leaving the Charity Schools, apart from the distribution of books and pamphlets to assist them in right conduct;[2] they were not always flung unfriended on the world's mercy. The Grey Coat Governors ordered personal inquiries to be made about the employers of their girl apprentices in and around Westminster, and cases of ill-usage to be duly reported.[3] On the other hand they felt a pride in the employers' testimony 'that they would rather take a servant from hence for nothing than to have Money with one from those Nurseries for Children where there is no Work added to their Learning'.[4] When the girls of Greenwich School went out to service they were allowed to take their school clothes, and if well reported on at the end of six

[1] Under 3 & 4 William and Mary, c. 11.
[2] *Minutes of the S.P.C.K.*, loc. cit., p. 4.
[3] E. S. Grey, *An Old Westminster Endowment*, p. 45.
[4] *An Account of Workhouses*, p. 68.

months, they received a striped gown and petticoat woven in the school. These Trustees 'avoided binding girls as Apprentices, preferring a year's service at 25*s*. to 30*s*., a second year at 40*s*., and a third at 50*s*. in wages', and they never allowed a girl to take service in a public-house, on pain of forfeiting her gratuity of clothes. Owing to the excellent instruction in housewifery given in this school the pupils' services were in great demand.

Dr. Watts insisted on careful inquiry about the sobriety, diligence, and piety of the families in which children from the Dissenters' schools were placed out, as well as into the children's behaviour: 'if it appears they have behaved well give them some token of your favour', is his kindly advice; 'ten or twenty or thirty shillings the first year or two after they are gone from the school. This will greatly encourage them to pursue the practice of . . . virtue.'[1]

Other schools showed less humanity and foresight in an undertaking which undoubtedly presented difficulties. Mandeville (1724) blamed many school governors for carelessness in placing their children out, but he adds that it was not in fact much easier for them than for the Parish officers to find willing and suitable employers, while the proximity of the children to their homes was a drawback. 'Few Men of Substance or Experience', he declares, 'will have anything to do with these Children; they are afraid of a hundred Inconveniences from the necessitous Parents: so they are bound . . . either to Sots or neglecting Masters, or else such as are very needy and don't care what becomes of their Prentices after they have received the money.'[2] This writer had the boy-apprentice chiefly in mind, but the lot of the girls was of the two the more precarious. The boy, as Mrs. Cappe pointed out, in learning a trade was on some sort of equality with his master; the girl was his slave, 'taught nothing but to labour beyond her strength in the most menial occupations, and to tremble at the frown of her tyrant'.[3]

[1] *Essay*, loc. cit., p. 716. [2] Mandeville, loc. cit., p. 343.
[3] Catharine Cappe, *Observations on Charity Schools* (1808), p. 53.

The system of Workhouses or residential working-charity schools with a partial endowment began before the middle of the century to be regarded as preferable to apprenticeship at the earliest possible moment; the girl-inmates could be employed until they were some years older, and a more thorough preparation be given them for independent situations. A few schools both in town and country reduced their numbers in order to provide funds wholly to maintain and supervise a small proportion of the children.[1] The position, both as it affected the pauper and the charity child, is well summed up in the report on Strood Workhouse in 1723, already quoted. The institutional system, it affirms, is much better for the children.

'Parish Officers are now too eager to get rid of them; they place them out so young, with little money, to sorry Masters, that 'tis little better than murdering them. But when Children are put into a way of contributing to their own Maintenance and may be kept in these Houses at little or no Charge to the Parish, till they are old enough for Trades or Services, it can hardly be supposed that Officers will then be so monstrously cruel as to go on in the old Road of sacrificing them.'[2]

In spite of these enlightened views the practice of apprenticing girls continued, and with it too often abuses of a terrible nature. Public opinion was not aroused to protest even by notorious cases, such as that of Francis Jouveaux, the manufacturer of muslin tambour, and his seventeen girl-apprentices, barbarously ill-used and starved to death, or of Mrs. Brownrigg, hung for the murder of numerous girl-victims after prolonged torture.[3] Even those bodies directly responsible for placing out girls, such as the Foundling Hospital, took no drastic action, but salved their consciences by nursing the broken

[1] Cf. *Report of the S.P.C.K.*, 1753, p. 40 (St. George's, Bloomsbury), and 1755, p. 44.

[2] *An Account of the Workhouses in Great Britain in the year* 1732 (3rd ed. 1786), p. 135.

[3] Cf. Cappe, *Observations*, p. 59, foot-note; for numerous other examples cf. M. D. George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* (1925), Chapter V, pp. 231–5, &c.

children in their infirmary wards till merciful death released them. The defenceless state of such wretched girls was indeed recognized in an Act of 1747, providing that any parish or other apprentice with whom a premium of not more than £5 had been paid, could make complaint of any form of ill-usage to two justices, who were empowered to grant free-process, and a discharge by warrant. The Act was amended in 1792, placing heavier penalties on the master or mistress, and giving the Justices power to compel parish officers to prosecute employers for cruelty.[1] But ability to set the law in action is lacking in a starved and friendless household drudge. 'It is only in extreme cases', wrote Mrs. Cappe as late as 1805, 'that the lamentable voice of the oppressed sufferer can ever reach the public ear, and there are various gradations of misery which, if they fall short of actual murder, must continue sealed up in silence until the great day of account.'[2]

5. *Criticism and Progress*

An undertone of antagonism to the Charity Schools is audible throughout the period of their chief activity. Two notes may be distinguished above the rest: the objections on grounds of policy, and those discovered in the course of experience by the philanthropic observer. Some reference to the accusation of disloyalty has already been made. Bishop Gibson, as a rule a friend to this form of Christian charity, complained of the Jacobite proclivities of Charity-school teachers and of their efforts to spread among the children an aversion to the Protestant succession.[3] Archbishop Tenison recommended that all masters and mistresses should, on appointment, make a Declaration of Loyalty to the Government, and promise to punish severely any of their scholars who ran into tumults or attended public meetings of disloyal persons.[4]

[1] Ib., p. 239.
[2] Cappe, loc. cit., p. 51.
[3] Watts, *Essay*, loc. cit., p. 738.
[4] *Report of the S.P.C.K.*, 1747–55, Appendix, pp. 24–5 (1719).

The promoters of dissenting schools proclaimed loudly that their institutions were no 'seminaries of disaffection'[1] but loyal to the King's person and government. 'We scorn', said Samuel Chandler, 'to prejudice the children against any party of Christians or to breed them up bigots to our own.'[2] Yet another danger to social stability lurking behind the walls of the Charity School was thought to be the taking of poor children from 'those servile Offices . . . for which the wise Governor of the World has by His Providence designed them', and the giving them wrong notions of self-importance through a too liberal education. This criticism, originally voiced by Mandeville, was met, as we have seen, by the increasing employment of poor children in industry. Dr. Watts, whose views are in many respects enlightened, made the suggestion, afterwards developed by Mrs. Trimmer, that the children of those who had come down in the world through misfortune, especially if they were orphans, ought to have the first claim on the schools and were the most likely to benefit by them. Those people who would forbid all learning of any kind to 'the meanest ranks of mankind' he reminded of the Christian motive; God has distributed genius, capacity, and 'sprightliness of mind' among rich and poor without discrimination. Ignorance makes slaves of a nation; 'a foolish rhyme, tossed about through a brutal multitude, has . . . fired a whole country into sedition'; education is, in fact, a kind of national insurance. Nor was the general advantage only to be considered, but the unhappiness, the empty leisure, the wretched scandalous talk, to which ignorance condemned whole families of working people.[3] Neither was it too much learning which lifted people above themselves; the remedy for self-conceit was to make the art of reading as common as that of speaking, and no one would then feel superior to his fellows. 'For my part', he adds significantly, 'I wish that there was not the meanest figure of mankind in Great Britain . . .

[1] Neal, *Sermon*, p. 22. [2] Chandler, *Sermon*, p. 35.
[3] *Essay*, loc. cit., p. 721.

but knew how to read his Bible.'[1] At the same time, Watts deprecated the education of poor folks' children to be as well-lettered as the sons and daughters of gentlefolk, or even of the middle classes; 'labour and learning should be joined in the education of the poorer parts of mankind.'[2] He thought it unnecessary for girls, as for the poor in obscure villages, to learn writing; their business being mostly within doors they had little occasion or inclination to use a pen.[3] Watts's *Essay* represents, on the whole, the most humane version, which remains to us, of the occupational principle of education.

The strictures of philanthropists were a far more serious matter, and they became insistent towards the close of the century. The development of the Charity School into a little manufactory carried with it an insidious danger. The masters and mistresses were expected to take over the proceeds of the children's labour, and, after paying the cost of maintaining the school, to keep the balance of the money for their own remuneration. The temptation to sweat the children, and, in residential schools, to underfeed them and neglect their comfort, was ever present. The abuse was probably seen at its worst in Ireland in the Charter Schools founded for instructing poor Irish children in English and the principles of the Protestant religion.[4] In England, about 1780, Mrs. Catharine Cappe drew public attention to the condition of the Grey Coat Girls' School in the City of York, where some twenty girls were boarded with a master and mistress who 'engaged to teach them to read, write, sew, knit and spin worsted, to wash and do household work', and received the profits of their labour. The school enjoyed a very bad reputation: few of the girls turned out well, they were sickly and undersized, the result of scanty fare and harsh treatment. The appointment of a committee of ladies, who gave unremitting attention to sensible methods of reform,

[1] Ib., p. 725. [2] Ib., p. 728. [3] Ib., p. 729.

[4] Cf. John Howard, *An Account of the Principal Lazarettos in Europe* (1789), Section vii (Charter Schools in Ireland), p. 109.

brought about a beneficent improvement. The school was not an isolated example; such evil conditions, in Mrs. Cappe's words, 'very generally prevailed'. Where the majority of the children were young their labour could not be made to pay, and in any case the system of farming was one that could succeed only where the teacher's primary object was the good of the pupils and not personal emolument. 'Is it wise', the writer asks, 'so to frame the constitution of any establishment that its well-being shall depend upon an accidental circumstance which cannot fairly be expected to occur one time in a thousand?'[1]

In the scale of benefits conferred by Charity Schools on two or three generations of poor English children the weights were neither light nor insignificant. The best testimony to their worth is perhaps the disquiet which, towards the close of the century, was manifested because the provision of schools of any kind was so insufficient to the general needs. It was evident that the requirements of the nation could not be met by endowed schools of this particular type. As early as 1710 the S.P.C.K. had circulated a proposal for teaching poor children to read and to repeat the Church Catechism in places too small to afford a Charity School, or where the parents were unwilling to spare them from field-labour for regularized instruction. 'Discreet and sober persons were to be pitched upon' who should receive 2*s.* 6*d.* a piece for every child taught to distinguish the letters of the Alphabet, 2*s.* 6*d.* more when it could spell, and finally 5*s.* when it could read well and distinctly and repeat the Catechism. The estimated cost of learning to read was thus but 10*s.* a head, and the charge for books 'very inconsiderable'. An experiment in this elementary private tuition, first made in some Wiltshire villages, proved successful as far as it went.[2] But something more in the way of mass teaching had clearly to be provided, and the moment was ripe for the experiments

[1] Catharine Cappe, *An Account of Two Charity Schools* (1800), p. 24.
[2] *An Account of Charity Schools*, 1710, p. 59.

in two types of schools which are chiefly connected with the names of Robert Raikes and of Mrs. Sarah Trimmer.

It is well known that the Gloucester experiment in Sunday Schools made by Raikes in 1780 was not actually the first of its kind, but owed its popular success greatly to his connexion with the press, and his ability to arouse a well-deserved sympathy with his efforts on behalf of poor children. Among Raikes's precursors the name of the Wesleyan Methodist, Hannah Ball, who kept Sunday School at High Wycombe from 1769 till her death in 1792, deserves honourable remembrance in a history of girls' education. Even earlier (1763) Mrs. Catharine Cappe and the Reverend Theophilus Lindsey had gatherings of the same kind at Catterick.[1] Beside Mrs. Ball and Mrs. Cappe a third woman pioneer, Mrs. Trimmer, takes her place, and the group is completed by the two excellent sisters, Hannah and Martha More.

6. *Mrs. Trimmer and the More Sisters*

Sarah Kirby, afterwards the wife of James Trimmer of Brentford, was born in 1741, and better equipped than many of her contemporaries for a life of unbounded literary industry by her education in Mrs. Justinier's boarding-school at Ipswich.[2] She was well-read and intelligent, and moved in the intellectual society of her day. It is related, though not by Boswell, that she met Dr. Johnson at Reynolds's house, and in a dispute upon some passage in *Paradise Lost* 'produced a Milton from her pocket', an action which laid her open to condemnation by the strictest code of feminine manners. She was the mother of many children, the subjects of her earliest educational experiments, and an ardent child-lover all her days: in composing her most popular books she fancied herself 'conversing with her own children in her accustomed manner', and this was one secret of their success.[3]

[1] *D.N.B.*, arts. Hannah Ball and Robert Raikes, *passim*.
[2] *Some Account of the Life and Writings of Mrs. Trimmer* (1814), vol. i, p. 2.
[3] Ib., p. 43.

When in course of years her nursery became empty she turned her thoughts to the ragged children who swarmed in the village street of Brentford. 'O my God', she wrote in her diary in 1786, 'prosper, I beseech Thee, the endeavours of those who establish Sunday Schools for the instruction of poor children. Lord, were I possessed of affluence, with what pleasure would I devote a part of it to this excellent purpose. Accept my humble endeavours to contribute out of the talent Thou hast committed to my charge. . . .'[1]

The book entitled *The Æconomy of Charity*, describing her methods of educating poor children, is said to have resulted from an interview which Queen Charlotte held with her about Windsor schools; it first appeared in 1787, and again, much altered and enlarged, in 1801. In many respects, consciously or unconsciously, Mrs. Trimmer was a disciple of Dr. Watts, although, unlike his, her survey was made in the decline of the Charity-school movement. She inclined to think that the original purpose of the founders was now outworn, and that the future usefulness of the schools lay not so much in offering education indiscriminately to any and every destitute child as in the selection of those children whose parents had 'come down' in the world, or still better those 'whose bright genius breaks through the thick cloud of ignorance and poverty'. 'It would be unjustifiable', she adds, 'to deny such children a chance of bettering their condition. . . .'[2] There were now, she declared, schools in existence adapted for almost every condition in humble life: the immediate need was a new system of classification. In the first degree should be placed the Charity School, where the ablest children might qualify as 'teachers in schools supported by charity, as apprentices to common trades and as domestic servants in respectable families'. The founders of Charity Schools aimed at giving children a sound religious education in their earliest years. Was it not possible to revert to this

[1] *Some Account of the Life and Writings of Mrs. Trimmer* (1814), vol. i, p. 109.
[2] Trimmer, *Æconomy of Charity* (1801), p. 26 et seq.

intention for the chosen few, instead of trying, on financial grounds, to make 'every Charity School a Manufactory'?[1]

The present methods had very obvious defects, especially the books in use were ill-adapted to their purpose; the spelling-books consisted of 'figurative sentences collected from the Scriptures which the children do not understand'; the perusal of the Old and New Testaments merely as reading exercises was 'a kind of profanation'; a constant repetition by rote of ill-comprehended words could not be regarded as an intelligent training in religion, and the children's behaviour at the numerous obligatory services left much to be desired. If Charity Schools were to enter on a new era of usefulness, a Practical System of Religious Instruction for the Poor, which she had already formulated from long personal experience, should be adopted, together with a series of books for the use of scholars and teachers.[2] The debt which Elementary Education at this early stage owed to Mrs. Trimmer's foresight in providing suitable lesson-books where none were in existence may be measured from the fact that two of hers, the Abridgements of the Old and the New Testaments, remained for seventy-seven years (from 1793) on the publishing list of the S.P.C.K., and a quarter of a million copies were sold.[3]

Next in degree to the reformed Charity School Mrs. Trimmer proposed to place the Day School of Industry. It is not very clear in what respect schools of this kind, which she and other educationists like Mrs. Cappe and Hannah and Martha More brought into being, showed much advance on the working day Charity Schools which had existed for many years past, except that they were even poorer and more makeshift. Two points must, however, be borne in mind: first, the feverish anxiety for a much more ample provision of schools; and secondly, the disasters which followed the introduction of machinery and the removal of children, and especially

[1] Ib., pp. 31, 32.

[2] Ib., p. 36, and for list of books, p. 52.

[3] See *D.N.B.*, art. Sarah Trimmer.

of poor girls unfit for domestic service, by thousands from London workhouses to labour in the cotton-mills. Mrs. Trimmer had no expectation that voluntary Day Schools of Industry would meet the whole need, and indeed she anticipated the time when 'every parish has its School of Industry supported with a part of the money collected by the Rates':[1] hers was a pioneer enterprise intended to induce the State to take action. In the second place, the result of the ill-regulated employment of children, when she wrote, had already become evident: she herself could not think of little children who worked in manufactories without the utmost commiseration.[2] She believed that much of the work done by factory children under wretched conditions might be carried on in schoolrooms set apart for industry, where they would at least be better cared for and kept from evil companionship.[3] Day Schools of Industry were suitable in her view alike for town and country conditions. She writes, with strong approval and an odd lack of perspective, about one such village school where well-behaved girls were rewarded with a sort of uniform, caps and tippets made from yards of patchwork, manufactured by 'the young ladies' and dyed with logwood;[4] and of another, supported by annual subscriptions of 5*s*., where stuff of fine texture woven by the scholars was worn by the committee ladies at Annual Charity Balls.[5]

In her own schools at Brentford she found many difficulties, both from the extreme ignorance and undisciplined behaviour of the girls, and from her own lack of expert knowledge in the industries she introduced; the girls' waste of wool was not less disastrous than the failure of patent spinning-wheels to accomplish all the makers vouched for them. In 1801 she had three schools at work: two of them, for 40 elder girls, were constantly employed in making soldiers' shirts at 5*s*. a dozen for a ready-made warehouse; the younger girls wound cotton and picked

[1] Trimmer, *Æconomy of Charity*, (1801), p. 193. [2] Ib., p. 199.
[3] Ib., p. 200. [4] Ib., Appendix, p. 237. [5] Ib., p. 248.

rushes for the use of tallow chandlers.[1] With irreproachable intentions the old evil of supplying cheap labour to make an endowment for religious education was thus perpetuated. The third position in Mrs. Trimmer's hierarchy of schools was to be filled by the Sunday Schools, which furnished 'a sufficient portion of learning for such as cannot be spared on weekdays from the labours of the plough'.

While Mrs. Trimmer gained experience in a village on the outskirts of London and Mrs. Cappe in a cathedral city, Hannah and Martha More experimented both in Spinning and Sunday Schools among the Mendip valleys. The graphic letters of the younger and more famous sister, written from 1789 onwards, present a vivid picture of the appalling conditions with which they courageously contended. At Cheddar there dwelt

'more than two thousand people in the parish, almost all very poor; no gentry, a dozen wealthy farmers, hard, brutal and ignorant . . . we went to every house in the place and found each a scene of the greatest ignorance and vice. . . . A great many refused to send their children unless we would pay them for it, and not a few refused because they were not sure of my intentions, being apprehensive that at the end of seven years . . . I should acquire a power over them and send them beyond sea. I must have heard this myself in order to have believed that so much ignorance existed out of Africa.'[2]

The power she exercised was, in fact, sufficient to redeem whole villages to comparative decency, and this in the face of difficulties not all attributable to poverty or ignorance. Teachers were hard to find, and manufacturers exacting in their requirements from the spinners. The farmers feared lest their ploughmen should become wiser than themselves;[3] some of the local clergy revived the old charge of seditious teaching, and accused the good ladies of being in the pay of Mr. Pitt, and even concerned with Charlotte Corday in the murder of Marat.[4]

[1] *Account of Life and Writings*, i. 302–6.
[2] R. Brimley Johnson, *The Letters of Hannah More*, pp. 166–8.
[3] Ib., p. 174.
[4] Ib., p. 192.

In spite of all opposition the work of reclamation, especially among the women and girls, went steadily forward; those who had passed through the Sunday and Spinning Schools and learned to read, sew, and knit—the scheme 'allowed of no writing for the poor'[1]—were assisted, when they married and became mothers, by the establishment of friendly benefit societies, probably the first of their kind.[2]

Mrs. Trimmer and Hannah More both survived to see, and at some points strongly to criticize, those efforts of William Lancaster and Dr. Bell, to improve educational opportunities for labouring people, which belong to the opening of the nineteenth century. Both ladies hold an honourable place in the sequence of reformers who, by slow and painful degrees, vindicated the right to knowledge of all children possessing the power to learn, irrespective of their condition in life.

[1] R. Brimley Johnson, *The Letters of Hannah More*, p. 183. [2] Ib., p. 185.

XV

THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BOARDING-SCHOOL

1. *Introductory*

ALTHOUGH by this date boarding-schools for girls had become an established feature of the educational system in England, they were neither universally approved nor highly esteemed; their standards generally speaking were inferior, the influence they exercised on character negligible where not actually corrupting: 'Seminaries of vice and insignificance', they are styled by one writer, 'where girls acquire nothing but the foibles, insipidities and delirium of their betters.'[1] There were, it is true, some few schools in the line of descent so to speak from Mrs. Makin's establishment; schools to be differentiated from the rank and file which aimed merely at producing a veneer of fashionable manners. These were in a position to benefit by the experiments in curriculum which distinguished the second half of the century, as well as by the pains expended on producing school-books more adapted for tutorial purposes than the Holy Scriptures or the fervid romance. Many women of parts, like Mrs. Montagu, took an interest in boarding-school education; some few others became mistresses, if primarily to make a living, yet with a genuine desire to benefit their countrywomen; they had ideals of character not unworthy their calling, and a far better literary equipment than the Mrs. Amyes and the Hannah Woolleys of an age gone by.

In the earlier years the boarding-school is to be studied mainly in the critical and usually contemptuous allusions of contemporary writers. *The Ladies' Catechism*, in 1703, attacked the kind of school which pandered to the 'all-French' craze of the moment. 'How was you educated?' the heroine is asked, and she replies:

'At a French Boarding-School.'

[1] *Female Tuition*, p. 42.

'After what manner?'

'By the help of a French Dancing-Master and a French Waiting-Woman.'

'Let me hear how you proceeded?'

'Why—Before I could speak English plain I was taught to jabber French; and learnt to Dance before I could go; in short, I danc'd French Dances at 8, sung French at 10, spoke it at 13, and before 15 could talk nothing else. . . .'[1]

Upon the pretext of a sneer at girls' boarding-schools Swift, in the name of Tobiah Greenhat,[2] renewed his ignoble attack on Mary Astell and her visionary college. He declared that the pupils' minds imbibed far other notions than those transcendental ideas which 'Madonella' pursued; and that it was to remedy this evil she had planned an institution for young damsels where—(instead of scissors, needles, and samplers)—pens, compasses, quadrants, books, manuscripts, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew employed their time. At this superior school the authoress of two choice Saxon novels, 'in repute with the ladies of Queen Emma's court', was to be one of the professors, while on holiday the girls were to study military tactics under 'Epicene'; this was a pseudonym for Mrs. Manly, the notorious writer of *The New Atlantis*, unworthy to be named with Mary Astell and her townswoman, Mrs. Elstob, the Anglo-Saxon scholar. Steele also was no admirer of existing schools: in the *Spectator* he parodied the school advertisement of the news-sheet, and incidentally held up to scorn the inept teacher in the person of Mrs. Letitia Tattle, who with no qualification save her reduced circumstances, instructed a crowd of voluble young creatures in the fashionable phrases and compliments in use at tea-tables or on visiting days.[3]

The intention of these and many similar allusions is merely to raise a laugh at the expense of the boarding-schools and to show up their wasteful futility; there is no

[1] *The Ladies' Catechism. Useful for all eminent Females, and necessary to be Learnt by all Young Gentlewomen that would attain to the Dignity of the Mode* (1703).

[2] *Tatler*, vol. ii, No. 63 (Ed. 1786).

[3] *Spectator*, No. 36 (11 April 1711). Cf. also No. 814, and *Ladies' Library*, p. 27.

attempt at formulating any better system. On the contrary, inefficient as they were, the schools hit the public taste, or perhaps saved trouble in the disposal of daughters, as the nunneries had once done.

From the middle of the century another factor must be given its due importance. Commercial prosperity was crowding the ranks of the gentry with worthy tradespeople and farmers, themselves of little or no education, who desired, in educating sons and daughters, to ape their betters at small expense. Hannah More, who possessed the journalist's aptitude for seizing the trend of ideas, in her well-known tale of Farmer Bragwell and his daughters, gave a fictitious dress to a situation of common occurrence. The girls are sent to boarding-school by an ambitious mother, with the instruction to 'hold their heads as high as anybody, not to be put upon, to spend with the best', to keep company with the richest and most fashionable pupils, and make no acquaintance in their own class; they return home to despise their parents and spend empty days reading trashy novels borrowed from a neighbouring book-shop.[1]

It was inevitable that the universal demand for accomplishments should enormously increase the supply of their strongholds, the girls' boarding-schools. A remark of the heroine in General Burgoyne's play, *The Heiress*, to the effect that the legend 'Young ladies boarded and educated', might now be seen painted in gold letters on blue boards in every village, is so often quoted by contemporary writers that its aptness was evidently recognized.[2]

2. *The Governess*

The question of providing a suitable staff should necessarily have become, with this marked increase in the number of schools, a very pressing one, yet few people indeed gave it any serious consideration. The provision of

[1] *The Complete Works of Hannah More* (1835), vol. i, p. 130.
[2] Cf. Zimmern, *Renaissance of Girls' Education* (1898), p. 11.

boarding-school teachers was approached far less systematically than the provision of Charity-school teachers, for whom some sort of training was at least attempted: as a brief survey will suffice to show it was entirely fortuitous and consequently entirely inadequate.

Queen Caroline wished Mrs. Elstob to open a girls' school, and among other women of an intellectual type Mrs. Montagu, personal motives apart, showed a real interest in the matter. About the period she visited her niece's school in Chelsea, she and other patrons of 'a more enlarged system of private education' endeavoured to persuade their admired friend, Lætitia Aikin, to start a college for young ladies, by way of providing an endowment for her impecunious marriage with Rochemont Barbauld.[1] Miss Aikin dreaded lest a 'literary academy' of this kind might produce characters like Molière's *Précieuses* or *Femmes Savantes*. For a woman so highly educated as she had been by her schoolmaster-father, her views were timid if not retrograde, and proved her loyal in the extreme to her own personal advantages. She felt the safest way for women to acquire knowledge was from conversation with a father, a brother, or a friend, in the way of family intercourse; no 'public' education, for the fifteen year old girl at any rate, could be equally serviceable with—'she had almost said'—an indifferent private one.[2]

The fashion of family schools, which gave a certain stability to many typical seventeenth-century establishments, like Mrs. Perwich's or Josiah Priest's, had now gone by. Until near the close of the period, with certain notable exceptions like the More sisters, the calling was scarcely regarded as anything better than a refuge for the impecunious, the unfortunate, the ignorant adventuress, the lady's maid out-at-elbows. Melancholy examples could be multiplied, but two only may suffice. About 1768 a girls' school in Chelsea was kept by a Mrs. Merribah Lorrington. She lived with her father, a retired school-

[1] Doran, loc. cit., p. 169.

[2] *Works of Anna Laetitia Aikin*, vol. i, Memoir, p. xvii.

master named Hill, an Anabaptist of terrifying aspect, who wore a long silver beard and a Persian robe. Intellectually Mrs. Lorrington was better qualified than many of her fellows; she had received a 'masculine education' in Latin, French, and Italian, was a good arithmetician and astronomer, and could paint beautifully on silk. She could also recognize talent in her pupils: 'Perdita', who was among them, describes how her mistress read to her after school-hours and encouraged her to write poetry.[1] But in spite of Puritan antecedents, intemperance was Mrs. Lorrington's bane, and at last brought her and her school to ruin. An even more striking illustration is the case of Miss Tyler, aunt to the poet Southey, who as a little girl was placed under a woman of notoriously ill-fame, wife to a butcher in Bristol and mother of many illegitimate children. Her school flourished exceedingly, and she retired from it at last with a competent fortune and was visited as long as she lived by her former scholars.[2]

In such schools the supervision was deplorable, and even the pupils' safety was not secured. There were 'many melancholy and desperate elopements constantly happening even from boarding-schools';[3] Hannah More in 1792 made a strenuous attempt to rescue an unfortunate young heiress who had been 'trepanned' away from school at the age of fourteen, betrayed into a wretched marriage, and carried abroad.[4] Even where the moral tone was irreproachable the educational attainments of many schoolmistresses scarcely fitted them to conduct a dame-school. If Miss More spent her leisure in teaching her assistants to spell, the most fashionable establishment in Herefordshire was conducted by two sisters who used to say, when they spoke of a former pupil, 'Her went to school to we'; while, according to Southey, the mistress of a school of good repute near Bristol, where Mrs. Siddons sent her daughter, made no better use of the English tongue.

1 *Memoirs of the late Mrs. Robinson written by herself* (1826), p. 19.
2 *Southey's Life and Correspondence* (1849), vol. i, p. 20.
3 *Female Tuition* (1785), p. 214.
4 *Memoirs*, loc. cit., p. 215.

The time-honoured practice of leaving in the hands of visiting masters all responsibility for teaching while the 'governess' superintended manners and imparted to the young ladies her own skill in ornamental fripperies was still almost universal. The 'frenzy for accomplishments' had its own share in this lamentable sequence of incompetency. Farmer Bragwell's daughters might return home to languish in idleness, and waste their father's substance; the daughters of the parsonage and others like them were forced to put their newly acquired learning to practical uses. From the schools there issued 'swarms of youthful females', and from these in turn were recruited an endless supply of 'superficial wives and incompetent and illiterate governesses'. The long-felt need for more women-teachers was thus at last amply met, but after such a fashion that substantial progress in education was retarded for yet two or three generations.

3. *London Schools*

Both in town and country some record remains of a considerable number of schools which have a certain individuality. Under Queen Anne, Mrs. Elizabeth Tutchin, a sister of Tutchin of the *Observator* newspaper, kept school at Highgate, still a favourite quarter, and offered young gentlewomen a 'sober' education in all kinds of suitable learning.[1] There were many refugee schoolmistresses, often of high reputation, such as Mademoiselle Puelle, whose school in London was limited to twenty girls of good position. Among her pupils, about the year 1707, was Mary Granville, Mrs. Delany; she seems to have acquired at this school as a young child the taste for fine paper-cutting which she afterwards developed into an art.[2]

The adventurous Charlotte Charke, Colley Cibber's younger daughter, when she was eight years old (*c.* 1717),

[1] Ashton, *Social Life*, p. 22.

[2] *Autobiography of Mary Granville* (1st series), vol. i, p. 3. In her *Autobiography* she writes of a school-fellow, Lady Jane Douglas, who 'would pick up the little flowers and birds I was fond of cutting out in paper and pin them carefully to her gown that she might not tear them by putting them in her pocket'.

was placed at Mrs. Draper's school in Park Street, Westminster, apparently one of the better sort, where the language-master, M. Flahaut, recognizing her undoubted abilities, taught her Latin and Italian, and she studied geography and the globes, music, and singing, with an ill-regulated ardour that seemed at last likely to fever her brain.[1] Mrs. Montagu herself appears to have attended for a time a Kensington school, kept by Mrs. Robartes, though her reminiscences had no intellectual bearing; 'The girls were so dirty', she remarks complacently, 'that sometimes one could not salute them.'[2] Mary Darby, afterwards Mrs. Robinson, the celebrated 'Perdita', as the child of an unfortunate home, had a vagrant education and attended a long series of schools, including Mrs. Hervey's at Oxford House, Marylebone; her 'governess' drew the attention of the manager of Covent Garden Theatre, who was dancing master at the school, to the girl's dramatic gift.[3] Thomas Day, the author of *Sandford and Merton*, when his experiment in educating a wife came to an abrupt end, placed his 'Sabrina' in a boarding-school at Sutton Coldfield, and married (in 1778) a young lady trained more successfully at a ladies' seminary in Queen's Square, Bloomsbury. His bride, Esther Milner, was seriously minded, and at school composed essays and poems and wrote sententious letters to her school-fellows.[4] Mrs. Thrale's daughters, Susan and Sophia, were educated at a school in Kensington, where they also took to writing verses: ''tis the fashion of the school they say', wrote Fanny Burney in 1779, 'and Sophy's are the best performances of all the misses, except one monkey of eighteen years old. . . .'[5] Another pupil at Queen's Square about 1760 was the laureate of schoolgirl poets, celebrated by David Mallet in a piece entitled

1 *Life of Mrs. Charlotte Charke* (1827), p. 17.

2 Doran, *A Lady of the Last Century*, p. 169.

3 *Memoirs of the late Mrs. Robinson*, p. 26.

4 John Blackman, *A Memoir of the Life and Writings of Thomas Day* (1862), p. 85.

5 *Diary and Letters of Madame d'Arblay* (1854), vol. i, pp. 78 and 351.

'The Discovery: upon reading some verses by a young lady at a Boarding School'. Apollo's messenger, who searches vainly at court—where

> 'Augustus knit his royal brow
> And bade him let Apollo know it
> That from his infancy till now
> He lov'd nor poetry nor poet' . . .

at the last moment before returning to Heaven discovers a daughter of the muses, and

> '. . . just as he his wings had ty'd,
> Look'd up Queen-square, the north-east side,
> A blooming creature there he found,
> With pen and ink and books around,
> Alone and writing by a taper:
> He read unseen, then stole her paper,
> It much amused him on his way
> And reaching Heaven by break of day
> He show'd Apollo what he stole.
> The god perus'd and lik'd the whole;
> Then calling for his pocket-book
> Some right celestial vellum took;
> And what he with a sunbeam there
> Writ down, the Muse thus copies fair;
> If I no men my sons must call,
> Here's one fair daughter worth them all;
> Mark then the sacred words that follow,
> Sophia's mine, so signed APOLLO.'[1]

Mrs. Montagu's favourite niece, much to her aunt's satisfaction, was sent to a Chelsea Boarding-School—where in 1772 she paid her a visit. 'I called on my pretty neice at Chelsea', she reported afterwards to the girl's parents, 'where I had the pleasure of finding her in perfect health, with a little addition of embonpoint extremely becoming. She received me very politely and her governess spoke much in her praise. Indeed she is a very good subject for them, appearing to have much good-humour, docility and everything I could wish. . . .' The critical eye of the

[1] Chalmers, *Poets*, vol. xv, p. 32.

lady of fashion found however something not to her mind: 'I found fault with her stays, which lift up her shoulders; and they say they had your leave to get others but I could not understand why they had neglected to do it.' And remembering her own school-days, she adds, 'I was pleased to find my neice perfectly clean and neat, tho' I called on ye Saturday, which is usually only the eve of cleanliness'.[1]

4. *The Country Boarding-School*

The country boarding-schools call for separate notice. They had always been modelled as closely as circumstances allowed on the London prototype, often with[2] results that provided food for jest. Still, as under the Restoration, for all their pretensions they were 'far remov'd from Court breeding', still the masters were the worst to be got for love or money, 'a strolling player for a dancing-master and a deserter from Dunkirk to teach the French language'; still the girls learnt 'to quaver instead of singing, hop instead of dancing, and rumble the virginals, scratch the lute and rake the ghitar' instead of playing neatly and handsomely.[3] The country school appeared in fiction as early as 1748, when Sarah Fielding, the author of *David Simple*, published her delightful child's story called *The Governess, or the Little Female Academy*. The Academy in question is situated in the northern parts of England and conducted by Mrs. Teachum, a widowed gentlewoman, forty years old, with a lively and commanding eye, who undertakes to educate nine young ladies in 'Reading, Writing, Working, and all proper forms of Behaviour'; her pupils are all under twelve except the head girl, Miss Jenny Peace. The book opens with a fray between the scholars over a basket of apples, in which is shown 'the sad Effects of Rage and Anger', and

[1] Doran, loc. cit., p. 169.

[2] In the Manor House School at York, Mrs. Lumley from 1693 till 1703 taught 'all sorts of Work in their Perfection, *on the pattern of the London Schools*'. *London Gazette*, 5 April 1703.

[3] Richard Flecknoe, *Ænigmaticall Characters* (1665), p. 86, Character 57.

it consists of a series of autobiographies of short lives, which the girls relate to one another in an arbour of roses and honeysuckle in the garden. There is a pleasant background of the country-side, the little heroines run wild in the fields, gather flowers and eat curds and cream. Education plays but a small part in the record and, besides Mrs. Teachum, no teacher except the writing-master is mentioned. Yet on the strength of the Governess, Sarah Fielding was regarded as something of an innovator, and projected a book upon Education. Especially her views on punishment aroused comment: she was suspected of being opposed to 'corporeal severities', and her opinions were discounted by all 'the party of the Thwackums' because she showed herself an enemy to proper discipline.[1]

Another romantic boarding-school, which had affinity with the Charity School, is described in *Millenium Hall* (1777), where, on the model of Mary Astell's college, were received the orphan daughters of 'persons in office or other life incomes', who had been left destitute, as well as girls of humbler origin but uncommon genius. They are educated to fill situations where 'accomplished women of an humble rank and behaviour' are required, either for the care of a house or children. They constantly associate with the lady-residents, but lest this should lead them 'to think their situation above a menial state' they take meals and walk out for an hour or two on fine days with the housekeeper.[2]

These books both contain pleasant and wholesome pictures, and however unfailing the laugh at the expense of the country boarding-school there was happily another side to its supposed ineffectiveness. There were schools where the education was 'sober', and mistresses who earned the respect of their pupils. Sarah Kirby (Mrs. Trimmer) looked back with gratitude to her schooling about 1750 under Mrs. Justinier at Ipswich, and considered that she owed her literary facility to the practice which she learned there of translating from French into English, as well as

[1] Richardson's *Letters*, vol. ii, pp. 61, 63. [2] *Millenium Hall*, p. 139.

an excellent handwriting and the power to read aloud agreeably and without fatigue.[1] Hannah More's eldest sister was educated at a French boarding-school in Bristol, and when she was not quite twenty-one (1757) turned schoolmistress herself, with the help of her four sisters. The ubiquitous Mrs. Robinson was for a time her pupil, and describes the attendance of the whole school at a performance of *King Lear*.[2]

The cathedral town of Salisbury about 1780 had at least three girls' schools.[3] Two of them were of the ordinary type, charging fees of £20 to £25 a year for such items as Board and Education, Music, Writing and Accompts, Dancing, and the French and English Languages. Mrs. Read's young ladies (1797), who were 'genteelly boarded and taught all sorts of needlework, tambour, &c., and the strictest attention paid to their morals', went home for holidays twice a year, breaking up for the summer on 12th June. Mrs. Voysey's school in the Close (1788) was probably of a better class:[4] her girls had but one vacation at Christmas. Her prospectus, a marvel of verbosity, enlarges on the advantages of early rising, cheerful recreation in the open air, and the elimination of 'Books of the least dissipating tendency', none of which were suffered to be read.

While these little ventures are long since forgotten, a third has survived to hold an honoured place among modern English girls' schools. The story of the Godolphin School is of special interest, because it would seem to have been the nearest approach to an attempt at carrying into effect the ideas of Mary Astell and of Sarah Scott, in *Millenium Hall*, about an assisted education for better-class girls. The founders of the school were members of

1 *Account of Life*, loc. cit., p. 2.

2 *Memoirs of the late Mrs. Robinson*, p. 13.

3 The information about the Salisbury schools is derived from manuscript notes of Miss E. E. Jones, formerly a mistress at Godolphin School, to which the present writer is greatly indebted.

4 Her entrance fee was £1 11*s.* 6*d.*, Mrs. Read's £1 1*s.* Compare their scales with 'Bobbin's' London school at £80 per annum.

an ancient Cornish family—Charles Godolphin, brother to Sidney, Earl of Godolphin, Lord High Treasurer of Great Britain, and Elizabeth, his wife. They died in 1720 and 1726 respectively, and are buried in the western cloisters of Westminster Abbey. The money they left to found their school had a romantic origin: the fortune of Sir William Godolphin, Envoy to the Spanish Court, who left two wills, had been snatched from the Spanish Jesuits by the decision of an English Court in favour of the testator's nephew and niece, Charles and Elizabeth Godolphin. Charles invested the spoil, some £8,000, in Venetian securities;[1] but the credit of the Zeccha fell so low that the money when retransferred by the widowed Elizabeth to England, produced little more than £3,300. From various sources and by careful husbanding a sum of £5,000 was at last made available for the purposes of the trust, but no steps were taken to give effect to the foundress's will till nearly sixty years after her death. In August 1784 the Godolphin School for a governess and eight young orphan gentlewomen with fortunes under £300, to be admitted at eight years old,[2] was at last opened in Rosemary Lane near the Close. The original terms of the will, which allowed to each young gentlewoman £20 a year in order that she might be 'tabled' with the schoolmistress and taught, as well as the money permitted, 'to dance, work, read, write, cast accounts and the business of Housewifery', were modified by the Court of Chancery to meet altered conditions. The scholars were now required to be daughters of clergymen, and to learn 'all things fitting to render them good and industrious wives', an elastic provision. To ease the financial situation the governess might take eight additional boarders on her own terms. Large powers of appointment and control were left in the hands of the patrons, the Godolphin family, but a singular lack of business capacity kept the school for

[1] The words are '42890 Ducats and 13 Grosses in the deposit of the Zeccha at Venice'.

[2] Later altered to £500 and twelve years respectively.

long in a depressed condition from which, in the nineteenth century, it emerged into prosperity. An endowment of this kind, for girls of good position, was quite unusual, and differentiates the Godolphin at once from the ordinary boarding-schools and the many girls' charity schools of the period.

Another interesting group of schools were those conducted by refugees. Eighteenth-century society, particularly after 1789, was permeated in all departments by fugitives from continental revolution; they were to be met with everywhere; dukes and marquises, the chevalier and the bishop, the scholar and the mere adventurer; ruined and penniless, yet always gay, light-hearted, admirably courageous, they frequented London assemblies or fashionable resorts like Bath, talking, laughing, squabbling, flirtatious. The women made millinery and artificial flowers for London shops, using their taste and skill, to find the wherewithal to live; the men gave lessons in fencing, dancing, music, or the French tongue. An admirable illustration of this episode in our social history is the description which Mrs. Sherwood gives of the school at Reading Abbey, to which she was sent as a little girl. It was no mushroom institution, but when she first knew it, in 1791, had existed longer by far than any person living had record of. It is uncertain even whether Mrs. Latournelle, at this time the proprietor, was the first Frenchwoman to have charge. Her successor, Miss Pitts, was a former 'parlour-boarder' and a disappointed heiress, who having lost a fortune went into partnership with her old governess. Later on she married M. St. Quintin, the son of an Alsatian nobleman in the diplomatic service. He too had had a romantic career, and was a ruined gambler when he came to teach French at the Abbey; fortunately he had the gifts of an admirable schoolmaster, in the style of the Abbé Gaultier, 'lively and interesting in the extreme', and through the joint exertions of husband and wife the school for some years became exceedingly prosperous.[1]

[1] Dr. J. Harvey Darton, *Life and Times of Mrs. Sherwood* (1910), p. 122 et seq.

On Mrs. Sherwood's arrival there were about sixty girls in the house. She gives a vivid account of her reception in 'a wainscotted parlour, hung round with chenille pieces representing tombs and weeping willows', and her welcome by Madame Latournelle, now grown elderly and stout, with a cork leg, but still active in the role of housekeeper. The new pupil as a 'parlour-boarder', ranked before the other boarders, and, if she chose, drank tea and supped in the parlour; supper especially was a festive meal, for some French gentlemen were usually present and French was always spoken; politics, literature, and Parisian and London gossip affording ample material for conversation.[1] The staff besides Monsieur and Madame St. Quintin consisted of three teachers: 'to describe these ladies', says the writer, 'would be no easy matter. Their names were Holt, Bournany, and Trelishaw. Miss Holt was a little simpering Englishwoman, very like a second-rate milliner of these days; she taught spelling and needlework. Miss Bournany was a dashing, slovenly, rather handsome French girl and ran away with some low man a few months afterwards: Miss Trelishaw was, I think, a Swiss.'[2] The elder girls had great liberty; beyond study for an hour or two every morning with M. St. Quintin, whose polite manners overwhelmed them, they were left much to themselves.

After a time M. St. Quintin resumed his gambling habits and the Reading establishment became daily less like a school. The execution of Louis XVI was followed by a great inrush of French nobility into Reading, and the schoolgirls 'lived more and more with the noble emigrants, talked with the ladies and danced with the gentlemen under the trees in the Abbey garden to the sound of the harp. We were then, as it were, completely carried away with the spirit and feelings of France in the olden times, and, though nominally at school were in fact leading what Mme de Genlis calls 'la vie de château'.'[3] The St. Quintins' school, now removed to London but

[1] *Life*, p. 127. [2] Ib., p. 125. [3] Ib., p. 151.

still the centre of unending hospitality to the emigrés, received at a later date Mary Mitford among its pupils, and is immortalized in *Our Village*.[1] Its whole history forms one of the most remarkable episodes in the chequered history of the boarding-school.

At the close of the century it becomes impossible to mistake the greater sense of responsibility about the whole matter of girls' education which is at long last making itself manifest. Especially is this true of certain outstanding girls' schools, among them the Miss Parkers' School at Ashbourne in Derbyshire, to be identified with the first serious attempt at giving system to the school-curriculum.[2] For the Miss Parkers Dr. Erasmus Darwin composed in 1797 his *Plan for the Conduct of Female Education in Boarding Schools*. These enlightened ladies had taken up their profession in the most business-like manner. They were, Dr. Darwin states in an Apology for his book, 'themselves educated for the purpose of educating others; and on that account were originally placed in different seminaries for female tuition; and afterwards engaged themselves for a time as teachers in other schools and in private families; the better to qualify themselves for the arduous task of conducting a boarding-school'. With careful attention to the claims of their scholars' health, and probably advised by Darwin, they established themselves on the outskirts of Ashbourne, in a pleasant situation well sheltered from the north-east on a dry sandy soil, with excellent water, and a fine park close at hand which afforded pleasant walks at all seasons of the year. A spacious walled garden adjoined the house, with a stream of water where the girls might bathe. Within doors were ample schoolrooms, approached by a stone staircase, the whole airy and well lit. The good ladies scoured the neighbourhood for teachers of sufficient

[1] Ib., p. 123.

[2] Mrs. Sewell speaks highly (1797) of 'Mr. Thurgar's school at Norwich a first-rate school for the day', where her governess was educated and learnt to teach history so well that it had 'the charm of reality', *Life and Letters of Mrs. Sewell*, by Mrs. Bayly (1889), p. 35.

excellence, including a 'polite emigrant as French master', some they brought from Nottingham, others from Derby and Lichfield. In this model school thirty girls were soon happily established—each being expected to bring with her, a pair of sheets, two towels, a knife and fork, and (last touch of elegance!) a silver spoon. The fees exceeded those in the Salisbury Schools of an earlier decade, and the curriculum gave a due prominence both to the old and new subjects considered most desirable for the improvement of a girl's mind.

5. *Drama in the Schoolroom*

The love for play-acting found expression in the schoolroom almost as soon as girls' boarding-schools were established, and after the Puritan ban was removed the practice of encouraging children to perform on the mimic stage was again revived. Fénelon had suggested that the dramatization of history lessons was a good way to arouse the pupils' interest: but many English schoolrooms were more ambitious, though none, like the pupils of St. Cyr, had a poet for their playwright. Marlborough's granddaughters performed for the old man's amusement Rowe's *Tamerlane* and Dryden's *All for Love*; the Duchess, a self-constituted censor 'scratched out some of the most amorous speeches, and no embrace allowed'.[1] There is a characteristic description in Sarah Fielding's *Governess* (1749) of the taste for play-reading among Mrs. Teachum's little girls, and of their extreme 'sensibility' to imagined sorrows. Miss Dolly Friendly notices that Miss Jenny's eyes are swelled with crying and begs to know her grief. Jenny replies, 'Last Night, after I went up Stairs I found amongst my Books the Play of the Funeral or Grief à la Mode; where the faithful and tender Behaviour of a good old Servant who had long lived in his Lord's Family, with

[1] *Memoirs*, loc. cit., vol. ii, p. 302. Cf. Coxe, *Marlborough*, vol. iii, p. 417 (1908). A prologue lauding the Duke's military prowess was written for the occasion by Bishop Hoadley, and the page who played Mark Anthony's part wore a sword of honour which had been an Emperor's gift to the conqueror of Blenheim.

many other Passages in the Play . . . made me cry so that I could hardly stop my Tears'. They urge her to read the play, and Miss Jenny is 'greatly pleased to find such a Sympathy between her Companions and herself; for they were most of them affected just in the same manner and with the same Parts of the Play as had before affected her'. Somewhat earlier than this we hear of Elizabeth Carter as a young girl taking the part of Juba in a schoolroom performance of Addison's play, while her father played that of Cato.[1]

As an educational reformer, Sarah Fielding did not allow her Mrs. Teachum to approve of girls reading plays 'where Morals or Manners are offended'. The choice of unsuitable dramas for schools was, however, constantly criticized. In 1762 Hannah More composed for her sisters' schoolgirls at Bristol, her celebrated Pastoral Drama *A Search after Happiness*, as a substitute for the plays, 'not always of the purest kind', acted by young ladies in boarding-schools. The little play is an extraordinary production for a girl of seventeen, although its interest is less in any dramatic value than in the reflection of contemporary ideas upon education of a rather advanced kind. It continued, however, to be a stock play for school-entertainments, and reappeared in a charming setting in Mary Mitford's *Our Village*, where it was represented by the pupils of Mme St. Quintin's school. Later in life Hannah More made another contribution to the schoolroom theatre in her volume of *Sacred Dramas*, published in 1782. As soon as her friend Jonas Hanway had read the book, and satisfied himself that the authoress had taken 'no undue liberty' with the Scriptures, he paid her a high compliment. He 'ran off' to the nearest book-shop, bought three or four copies and took them to 'a great boarding-school', where he had some little friends, telling the governess it was part of her duty to see that all her girls made a thorough study of the new plays.[2]

[1] Pennington, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 21.
[2] *Memoirs of Hannah More*, p. 103.

Madame de Genlis's *Théâtre d'Éducation*, of which one of many English translations appeared in 1787, also supplied comparatively 'safe' if somewhat insipid acting for girls' schools; Mary Butt (Mrs. Sherwood) describes the performance of one of these little plays, *La Bonne Mère*, in French, at Reading Abbey, before M. and Mme St. Quintin removed to London, when 'the great dancing room at the Abbey was fitted up as a regular theatre with foot-lights', and Mme Lafitte, one of the governesses of Princess Amelia, was an invited guest.[1]

Dr. Erasmus Darwin devoted a section of his *Plan* to the reading of plays in girls' schools, and thought Sheridan's might be read 'without injury to their morals or much outrage to their feelings'. He hesitated, however, to allow of the acting of plays by girls, and for a reason which can only be given in his own words: 'The danger consists in this, lest the acquisition of bolder action, and a more elevated voice, should annihilate that retiring modesty and blushing embarrassment to which young ladies owe one of their most powerful external charms.'[2]

These examples may suffice to show that the girls' play on prize-day and at Christmas festivities has no inconsiderable background of history.

6. *On Physical Training and Care of the Health*

Not the least original part of Fénelon's Treatise is the section on teaching girls the care of their health. The writer is fully aware of the interdependence of mind and body and would have it 'sweetly insinuated' into the pupil that ill-health not infrequently springs from a lack of virtue and of courage, and that intemperance, imprudence, sloth, passion, melancholy, anxiety about temporal matters, 'change into mortal poisons the aliments designed for the preservation of life'.[3] There is need for careful observation and analysis of physical as well as intellectual

[1] *Memoirs of Mrs. Sherwood*, p. 144.
[2] Darwin, Section XIII, p. 32.
[3] Hickes, p. 260.

characteristics; 'a wise governess', says the writer, 'will be always studying the Child's inclinations, Dispositions, Sympathies, and Aversions, and making a discreet Use of all these both as to Body and Mind . . . in the Knowledge of what is profitable and agreeable and what is hurtful and disagreeable to the Child's Nature doth the chief Art consist of preserving and securing her bodily Health'.[1] All important are simple food and drink, a regular diet eaten deliberately and well-chewed; without doing violence to delicate constitutions, girls should be enured to hardship, and so acquire bodily strength and vigour[2] and be better able to bear the vicissitudes of weather. Nor should they slight 'the Gymnastick Physick of the Ancients', although it was primarily intended for boys. The use of regular and moderate exercise in the open air, of walking, riding, dancing, and singing, is an essential part of the regimen of health.[3] Fénelon places such an emphasis on the due control of the imagination as to suggest that nervous diseases were very prevalent among girls and women in his day. He sees the conclusion of the whole matter in an 'Art and Prudence to fortify the Reason and debilitate the Imagination in Young Ladies'. This alone would establish 'in a sound, sprightly Body, Clearness and Serenity of Soul'.[4] All these recommendations Locke carried even further than the elder writer. Almost his only concern indeed with little girls is the improvement of their physique: the more they are in the open air, 'without prejudice to their Faces', the stronger and healthier they will become: the nearer they can be brought to the hardships of their brothers' education the better for them in after life.[5] To simplicity of food he would add simplicity of clothing, which is both more healthful than finery and less conducive to vanity; 'when the little girl is trick'd

[1] Hickes, p. 258.
[2] Ib., p. 263.
[3] Ib., pp. 267–8.
[4] Ib., p. 271.
[5] Locke, loc. cit., p. 7. Since these pages were written the publication of Locke's letters to the Clarke family (ed. Benjamin Rand, 1927) has thrown light upon his affectionate interest in Elizabeth Clarke, his 'little wife', and the views he held about her upbringing in health and hardihood.

up in her new Gown and Commode, how can her Mother do less than teach her to admire herself by calling her her little Queen and her Princess'.[1]

Despite such sane and authoritative advice, contemporary practice continued for the most part to be entirely contrary to the ideas of the philosophers. Fashion, and not Hygiene too often dictated the habits of body in which girls were trained; false standards of beauty and false notions of social success induced many mothers, in pursuit of the fashionable contour or the fashionable complexion, to submit their daughters to processes that tortured their young bodies and distorted their limbs. The comments, for example, which Locke made on the practice of tight lacing, are emphasized by William Law in the *Serious Call*, and prove an insensibility to suffering scarcely more credible than the deliberate brutality Erasmus had attacked two centuries before.

'I have seen so many Instances of Children receiving great Harm from Strait-lacing', Locke tells us, 'that I cannot but conclude there are other Creatures as well as Monkeys who . . . destroy their young ones by senseless Fondness and too much embracing.'[2] Law's indictment is more fierce; the Matilda of his *Serious Call*, a woman of good breeding, great sense, and much religion, brings up three daughters in strict piety; 'there is scarce a good book of devotion but you may find it in their closets'. Yet in truth the god she worships is the god of fashion. Her daughters are afraid to meet her if they have missed church, but 'more afraid if they are not laced as straight as they can possibly be'. She stints their meals, for fear of spoiling their shapes, and physics them incessantly to keep their complexions delicate. The oldest daughter, having lived as long as she could support this discipline, died in the twentieth year of her age, when it was found that the organs of her body were distorted and displaced 'by being crushed together with her stays, which her

[1] Locke, loc. cit., p. 8.

[2] Ib., p. 8.

mother had ordered to be twitched so strait that it often brought tears into her eyes whilst the maid was dressing her'.[1]

Nor are such indictments confined to the early years of the eighteenth century. Certain educational writers even profess to admire the anaemic, neurotic, hysteric type of girl produced by lack of fresh air, semi-starvation, and other unwholesome practices of the votaries of Fashion. 'We so naturally associate the idea of female softness, and delicacy with a correspondent delicacy of constitution', Dr. Gregory informed his daughter, 'that when a woman speaks of her great strength, her ability to bear excessive fatigue, we [that is the male sex] recoil at the description in a way she is little aware of. A wise woman enjoys her good health in grateful silence but never boasts of possessing it.'[2] The author of *Female Tuition* thought that nature intended girls for the 'still scenes of retirement', but acknowledged that too sedentary habits were fatal to thousands: they were timid to excess, 'their whole frames incessantly deranged by the most trivial shocks', such as the jarring of a door, the howling of the wind, the sight of a frog or mouse.[3]

School-mistresses were merely endeavouring to carry out the dictates of parents when they invented strange instruments to induce in their pupils an upright carriage or an elegant pose of the head. Mary Butt (Mrs. Sherwood) about 1780 did her lessons standing in stocks, with an iron collar round her neck, and a back-board strapped over her shoulders.[4] Mary Fairfax (Mrs. Somerville), when she entered, at the age of ten (1780), Miss Primrose's boarding-school in Musselburgh, although 'perfectly straight and well made', was enclosed in stiff stays, with a steel busk, her shoulders drawn back by bands till the shoulder-blades

[1] Law, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1824), pp. 318–21.

[2] *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters*, by the late Dr. Gregory of Edinburgh, p. 148.

[3] *Female Tuition, or An Address to Mothers on the Education of Daughters* (Anon.), 1785, p. 18.

[4] F. J. Harvey Darton, *The Life of Mrs. Sherwood* (1910), p. 34.

met, and a steel rod with a semicircle passing under the chin clasped to the stay-busk.[1] 'Is it surprising', asked Gisborne in his celebrated *Enquiry* (1797), 'that a girl when grown up, should starve herself into shapefulness and overspread her face with paint who was trained at a boarding-school to swing daily by the chin in order to lengthen her neck and accustomed to peculiar modes of discipline contrived to heighten the complexion?'[2] Dr. Erasmus Darwin had known girls dieted at school to prevent their being too fat, who subsequently starved themselves to emaciation, and led in consequence 'diseased and comfortless' lives.[3]

Throughout the century school hygiene was non-existent, or in a very elementary stage. Dr. Darwin may claim a place among the reformers of the boarding-school chiefly for his efforts to introduce more healthful conditions. He attributed the pale faces and listlessness of young people in school to the over-sedentary lives they led, and urged a greater activityto promote health and growth; especially such games as playing at ball and shuttlecock, 'swinging as they sit on a cord or cushion', dancing—in summer in the open air, and within doors in winter—ringing a bell hung like a church bell, or drawing a weight by a cord over a pulley, with a fly-wheel to prevent its too hasty descent, skating, swimming, even dancing on a rope. He deprecated Madame de Genlis's suggestion of carrying weights on the head, as milkmaids do their pails, or weighting the soles of children's shoes with lead to strengthen their muscles in walking, no less than the stocks and other apparatus beloved of the English schoolmistress.[4] Like Law, but with greater medical knowledge, he inveighed also against the use of strait-laced, hard corsets, and of tight bandages for young girls, and rejoiced at their temporary disappearance through the introduction of the Grecian style of dress, loose and flow-

[1] Martha Somerville, *Personal Recollections of Mary Somerville* (1873), p. 22.
[2] *An Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex* (1797), p. 76.
[3] Darwin, p. 112.
[4] Ib., pp. 69–70.

ing, a fashion which, as he thought, added much to the beauty of young ladies.[1]

It was the custom even in expensive schools to put the girls to sleep two in a bed on the plea that in winter the children kept one another warm. Arthur Young's daughter 'Bobbin' slept with a girl who was deaf in one ear and consequently lay always on the same side; the bed was so narrow her companion had to do the same; this, combined with insufficient food and air—the 'measured formal walk, all running and quick motion prohibited'—helped to sow the seeds of consumption, of which she died, at the age of fourteen.[2] Dr. Darwin had evidently known other cases of the kind, for he urged that 'Young ladies should be directed where two sleep in a bed, to change every night or every week their sides of the bed; which will prevent their tendency to sleep always on the same side; which is not only liable to produce crookedness, but also to occasion disease by the internal parts being so long kept in uniform contact as to grow together'.[3]

The subject of the school dietary also engaged the good doctor's careful attention, and he found much fault with its insufficiency. His remarks must have brought dismay into thrifty households, for he insisted on the importance of giving the girls unskimmed milk; 'to take off the cream once or even twice, as is practised in some boarding-schools, before it is given to the children, is a shameful circumstance of parsimony and very injurious to their health'.[4] His dietary is quite in accord with modern ideas, with the possible exception of a ration of small beer: it includes abundance of ripe, fresh fruit, which he suggests might be supplied to the girls when they lay out their pocket-money with hucksters, instead of over-spiced gingerbreads and 'suger-plumbs' coloured with gamboge, vermilion, and verdigris.[5] The practice

[1] Ib., p. 78.

[2] *Autobiography of Arthur Young*, p. 263. The fees at this school were £80 a year.

[3] Darwin, p. 77. [4] Ib., p. 108. [5] Ib., p. 111.

of punishing juvenile peccadilloes by giving the offender water-gruel, a practice which often lays the foundation of 'incurable debility', is one to be banished from the school code.[1] To his plea for abundant food, he adds a plea for unstinted fresh air. Even delicate children should go out in winter for short periods; cold air for them is more important than cold water ablutions; in summer young people can scarcely continue too much in the air. In school the atmosphere needs perpetual change and renovation: in the classrooms, an inch should be sawn off the top of the door and a tin plate fixed at right angles to make a ventilator, while windows are to be kept open at the top, both in living and sleeping apartments.[2] His book marks a great and humane advance on any contribution as yet made to this important subject. A few words by way of illustration remain to be said on the educational recreation and healthful exercise which schoolgirls were able to enjoy.

Even the most sensitive appeared on the side of Locke and Fénelon in one respect; they obeyed the admonition to take dancing exercise. In the days of the *Spectator* dancing was not indeed so clearly recognized to have a hygienic, apart from its social, value, as to justify the great amount of time spent by the average girl upon this branch of training. 'When a girl is safely brought from her nurse,' wrote Steele in an early number, 'before she is capable of forming one simple notion of anything in life, she is delivered to the hands of her dancing-master; and with a collar round her neck the pretty wild thing is taught a fantastical gravity of behaviour and forced to a particular way of holding her head, heaving her breast and moving with her whole body; and all this under pain of never having a husband if she steps, looks or moves awry.'[3]

For a time the popularity of dancing and with it the importance of the dancing-lesson, appears in the best society to have waned, chiefly because it was becoming 'common'. Among the mid-century letter-writers some looked askance

[1] Darwin, p. 87. [2] Ib., pp. 71–3. [3] *Spectator*, No. 66.

on the art; some actually condemned it, unless for parents who preferred their daughters, like Sempronia, to be 'rather elegant than virtuous'. Lord Kames felt the hours spent on dancing far more than were sufficient to prevent awkward movements.[1] *The Polite Lady* indeed commended the art to Sophia at her boarding-school as invaluable to impart a modest assurance and address, and to prevent the débutante from blushing when she was introduced into fashionable assemblies; but her counsels were usually adapted to those who had hardly as yet 'arrived'.[2]

The eclipse of so favourite a pastime was of brief duration. When Hannah More published her *Strictures on Female Education*, the art of dancing was pursued with a thoroughness unmatched in earlier days; 'it cannot', she writes, 'with any degree of safety be confided to one instructor; a whole train of successive masters are considered as absolutely essential to its perfection'; one professor teaches the Scotch steps, another French dances, and both have the honour to co-operate with a finishing master, each receiving 'a stipend which would make the pious curate . . . rich and happy'.[3]

The decay of dancing, or at least its delegation to the rank of a healthful exercise for the young, was due in some measure to the growing appreciation of various open air pursuits. Following on the counsels of Locke and Fénelon, and, let it be added, the example of Queen Mary II, the occupation of gardening was coming into favour, and is constantly recommended as a subject to be taught even in the boarding-school. The Reverend John Bennett encouraged his readers, by the example of Milton's *Adam and Eve*, to believe that 'Attention to a garden is a truly feminine amusement. If you mix it with a taste for botany and a knowledge of plants and flowers you will never be in want of an excellent restorative.'[4] The charity scholars

[1] Henry Home of Kames, *Loose Hints upon Education* (1781), p. 272.
[2] *The Polite Lady*, Letter VI, p. 14. [3] *Strictures*, p. 325.
[4] Rev. John Bennett, *Letters to a Young Lady* (1795), vol. ii, p. 14.

at Millenium Hall had each a garden where they might indulge their own fancy, adorning it with beds of flowers, little seats and arbours, and finding in it as much pleasure as other children in sports and games.[1] The taste thus implanted was greatly encouraged by the appearance of Rousseau's *Émile*, and for girls especially, by Madame de Genlis's *Adèle et Théodore*. In fashionable schools, towards the close of the century, girls were encouraged to possess their own little plots of ground, the healthfulness of the occupation being held to compensate for 'a few dagged frocks and dirtied gloves', and likely to lay the foundation of a home-loving character.[2]

The exercise of walking was also considered good for schoolgirls, though some writers were so enlightened as to take exception to the 'crocodile'. 'Is it exercise', asks one, 'to pace once a day in procession down a street or round a square; or in regular arrangement to follow a teacher along the middle walk of a garden, forbidden to deviate to the right hand or to the left?'[3] Some girls were taught to ride, but the awful example of the Princess Amelia Sophia, daughter of George II (1711–86), whose passionate love of hunting led her to adopt masculine costume[4] when on horseback, seems to have aroused a doubt in many minds whether Amazonian qualities were compatible with female decorum, and the prejudice was slow to pass away. Richardson (1741) composed a model letter addressed to a young lady affecting manly airs which censured the modern riding-habit: 'I have been particularly offended my Dear at your new Riding-habit; which is made so extravagantly in the Mode that one cannot easily distinguish your sex by it. For you neither look like a modest Girl in it, nor an agreeable Boy.'[5] Even in 1785 the author of a work, widely read, on the education

[1] *Millenium Hall*, p. 189.

[2] Gisborne, p. 89, foot-note.

[3] Ib., p. 89.

[4] Jesse refers to a portrait of her at Hardwick in a round hunting-cap and laced coat, looking like a man. *Court of Hanoverian Monarchs*, vol. iii, p. 212.

[5] *Familiar Letters on the most Important Occasions in Common Life* (1741), Letter xc.

of daughters deplored that 'Fashion has affixed the idea of charming and noble to an elegant woman on a fine horse. The man who never saw this preposterous junction could hardly conceive a position in which two such handsome animals could be more ludicrously placed.'[1]

Looking back over the century it may be said that the trend of education was to bring girls away from sedentary pursuits at home into the enjoyment of the open air and sunshine, to the detriment possibly of their skill in embroidery and housewifery but to the advantage of the general health.

[1] *Female Tuition*, p. 212. (Cf. H. More, *Strictures*, p. 324: 'Fashion ... shifted the scene and produced ... the hoyden, the huntress and the archer; the swinging arms, the confident address, the regimental and the four-in-hand.')

XVI

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, 1688–1740

1. *Introduction*

MANY of the ideas which chiefly controlled educational developments in the period now to be reviewed and throughout the eighteenth century have come, in our own day, to appear even more remote and antiquated than those which had obtained two centuries earlier: they were not in fact in themselves basic principles of education, so much as the initial stages, crude and soon to be outgrown, of convictions we ourselves have come to hold dear. An age that required a reasonable assurance on all matters within the region of debate, asked itself to whom belonged the right of enlightenment by teaching and study; was it conceivable the borders of learning ought to be extended? The reply at first insisted upon was that education was inexorably a question of social position; the degree of instruction, especially such as related to this world, must be determined 'by the station and rank of life in which children are born and placed by the providence of God'.[1] This sentiment permeated educational theory and practice, and became, before the century closed, so harmful and so perverted that it required the force of a revolution to begin its protracted conversion.

At the outset one must recognize that, whatever its origin, the occupational or caste principle had in its day the power of a religious conviction; modern writers may define it as a last effort of the spent forces of feudalism; contemporary writers regarded it as part of the divine ordering of human society. Though it might perhaps be

[1] *Treatise on the Education of Children and Youth*, Works of Isaac Watts, vol. v (1810), p. 358.

suspect, as the expression of an overweening arrogance, on the lips of lordly prelates, in a man so pious, so sympathetic as, for example, Isaac Watts, it can but be accepted in all sincerity. The reasonableness of educating poor men's children *en masse* had not indeed suggested itself before with the same insistence. Inevitably so momentous a step was taken with some hesitation over what it might bring upon society at large, what prerogatives might be shaken, what spectres raised up.

The emphasis upon social position is of special interest in our own inquiry; for it implies that the question of education as between boys and girls has now given way to a question of education as between the rich and poor. The main argument, that girls cannot be left in ignorance, has been conceded—grudgingly it may be, and hedged in by such restrictions as allow but a narrow plot where they may labour unmolested—but still so as to offer no further room for serious dispute. The gain during the years actually under review is almost imperceptible; the note of contempt is crudely expressed and female erudition still regarded with suspicion in many quarters.

Society, especially in London and the larger towns which took their tone from the metropolis, had not yet recovered from the excesses of the Restoration Court; the poison had spread and penetrated. Dramatic literature, the most influential of all, was thoroughly corrupt; romance withered under the same blight. The essayists took upon themselves a benevolent censorship of manners, and, following in the steps of Molière, they charmed by their art while they implicitly condemned contemporary society by a lively portrayal of its foibles, and in this way, for women especially, performed an invaluable service. Educational writers were, in the meantime, occupied in animadverting upon the vogue for frivolity and all it implied for its child-victims. While virtuous people busied themselves, by means of the Charity School, to lift the destitute girl into virtue and respectability, the young gentlewoman was, in all essentials, more neglected than she had ever

been, a poor captive bound from early childhood at the chariot wheels of ludicrous and unseemly fashion.

Yet the evil impulses no longer originated with the Court. Queen Mary II, during her brief reign, mourned over the national irreligion, and set an example of saintly living that aroused an ardent admiration in her subjects. Anne, in spite of an irresolute character, was the consistent patroness of charitable effort; while the uncrowned queen of her Court, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, though an irreconcilable partisan and possessed of a violent temper, did not incur the reproach of an irregular life.

Educationally the whole epoch from the Restoration to the close of the eighteenth century falls into three well-marked periods, and to each one belongs a group of women who embodied the best characteristics of their day. The leading women of the first period, the age of Queen Mary, were imbued, as she was, with the spirit of personal devotion, and endowed beyond her capacity with good intellect and some literary ability. They are successors of the Renaissance ladies, as a rule less learned, and even, with some notable exceptions, unambitious of scholarship, aloof from affairs, and dreading the very name of 'virtuoso'; but not less eager students of theology and the philosophy of religion.

The condition of the boarding-schools at this time has already received some comment, while the theory of girls' education was enriched by the contributions of Fénelon, Locke, and Isaac Watts.

2. *Some Theories of Female Education*

In the sequence of educationists which begins with Montaigne and leads on to Rousseau, the name of Fénelon occupies a more important position in reference to girls than that of Locke. Locke did not indeed follow his master Montaigne to the extent of believing it unsafe to put into a woman's awkward hands the dangerous weapon of learning;[1] but apart from his friendship with

[1] Montaigne, *Essays* (trans. Cotton), Bk. I, ch. 19.

his patroness, Damaris, Lady Masham—and the exception is an important one—the circumstances of his life gave him little insight into female character; the problem he set himself to solve was the education of a young gentleman. His root-principles, his insistence upon the formation of good habits in children by good practices, and upon the influence of right companionship in a child's upbringing, were bound, sooner or later, to have an effect upon girls' education, as indeed they can be shown to have had. The actual details he applies immediately to girls are, however, confined to their physical education.[1]

With Fénelon the case was very different. 'In every pedagogue', a French writer has remarked, 'there is a moralist, and, in the philosophic sense of the word, a director of the conscience. Fénelon by vocation and circumstance was both.'[2] For ten years (1678–88), as Superior of the Community of the Madeleine de Tresnel and of the Nouvelles-Catholiques, daughters of Protestant families recently converted, he had unrivalled opportunities of studying the psychology of young girls. He combined in himself the qualities of a man of the world at once grave and gay—the charm of manners, the unbaffled lucidity, the ease that sets others at ease in difficult situations—with a dominating spirit and an unwearying patience able at last to persuade even where it failed to convince. 'Il disait à Mme de La Maisonfort, que l'on faisait religieuse malgré elle', M. Rousselot reminds us: '"La vocation se décide autant par la volonté d'autrui que par la volonté personnelle";[3] et il avait l'art de lui faire accepter cette maxime effrayante.'

A schoolmaster of this type could hardly, it might be supposed, lay down maxims acceptable to the liberty-loving spirit of our race. But English girlhood under Mary and Anne was not the spontaneous thing it is to-day. And in fact Fénelon's *Traité de l'Éducation des Filles* pointed the way to a far sounder estimation of its claims

[1] Locke, *Some Thoughts concerning Education*, ed. R. H. Quick (1913), p. 7.
[2] Rousselot, loc. cit., vol. i, p. 385. [3] Ib.

than had ever yet been conceded. The book, first published in 1687, was introduced to English readers in 1704 by the learned non-juror Dr. George Hickes, who throughout his life was a promoter of women's education, and in a sermon on Almsgiving, preached in 1684 before the Lord Mayor in St. Bride's Church, had already advocated the endowment of 'schools or colleges for the education of young Women, much like unto those in the Universities for the Education of young Men'.[1] With great skill Hickes adapted to the English mentality the less acceptable maxims of his author. At the same time he dwelt, in his dedication to the Duchess of Ormond, not only with admiration on the character of that great and good man the Archbishop of Cambray, but also on his disposition towards reforming abuses in the Gallican Church. 'You'll find', the dedication runs, 'how he warns Ladies against Superstition in Religion and declares against admitting any thing into Faith or Practice but what is warranted by the Gospel and constant Approbation of the Church. . . . He nowhere directs them to pray before Images or to call upon Saints or Angels or to pray for the Dead or to get Indulgences; or wear Relicks or use Beads. . . .'[2]

With such reservations Dr. Hickes set a high value on Fénelon's book, with which he had probably become acquainted during his visit to France, to confer with James II, in 1693.[3] In his opinion it deserved acceptance with 'all persons of good Relish, both Protestants and Roman Catholicks'. In France, at its first appearance, he says, 'tho' it overturn'd all the former Methods of Education, it gently forc'd its own way into the best of the Families of France, against the strong Torrent of Opposition':[4] in England, where its wise counsels were greatly needed, it had no such sensational reception, but yet exercised a lasting influence. Sometimes this was shown

[1] *A Sermon at the Church of St. Bridget*, 1684, by George Hickes, Dean of Worcester, p. 26.

[2] *Education of Daughters*, Dedication, A 4.

[3] *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, art. Hickes, *passim*.

[4] Hickes, loc. cit., to the English Reader.

in unsuspected directions; Steele, for instance, in his admired and widely read *Ladies' Library*, borrowed without acknowledgement, long passages from Hickes' *Fénelon*.[1]

Fénelon's Treatise was composed for girls of good family, as was Locke's for a gentleman's son, and gives a picture of French society of the day. Its great originality lies in the psychological study of a young girl's mind which it presents, for the first time, as a necessary approach to an effective education. Many of the ordinary faults of girlhood, faults which his predecessors for centuries had laid to the charge of the perverse, restless, and illogical nature of women, Fénelon attributed solely to a defective upbringing. 'The Ignorance of a Young Woman is the cause she is commonly so Burdensome to herself and knows not how to spend her time Innocently. For after she is come to an Age of Discretion, without having ever applied herself once to solid Matters, she can then have no manner of relish or esteem for 'em.'[2] When she is in this condition what is to be done with her? Her mother is for ever chiding her, and never overlooks a fault; she is 'starched before her and makes her undergo all her Humours'; this can be no happy relationship. The servants flatter her; her companions too often insinuate that a steady rule of life is death to every enjoyment. A vast empty space yawns before her, unlikely ever to be filled except by inanities. The girl in desperation either abandons herself to idleness or hungers after diversions with insatiable eagerness.

'Young women without Instruction and Application have always a roving Imagination. For want of solid Nourishment, their Curiosity violently turns them toward vain and dangerous Objects. Such as have a little Capacity are in danger to set up for Wits; they read, for this, all the Books that may feed their Vanity; they are extremely affected with Romances, with Plays, with the Relations

[1] Cf. *Ladies' Library*, pp. 18, 22–5, &c. Elsewhere Steele acknowledges acquaintance with the book he had pilfered by commending, in a letter to the *Spectator*, 'the Bishop of Cambray's *Education of a Daughter*, as it is translated into the only language I have any knowledge of.' *Spectator* (1819), vol. ii, No. 96, p. 85.

[2] Hickes, p. 7.

of Chimerical Adventures . . . using themselves to the magnificent Language of Heroes or Heroines in Romances, they spoil themselves hereby for Converse in the World: . . . A poor raw Girl, whose Head is fill'd with the moving and surprising strains, which have charm'd her in her Reading, is astonished not to find in the World real Persons who may answer to these Romantick Heroes. Fain would she live like those imaginary Princesses, . . . always Charming, always Adored, always above all kind of Want: What a Disgust must it be then for her to descend from this Heroical state down to the meanest parts and Offices of Housewifry.'[1]

The tragedy of the undisciplined imagination has seldom been more forcibly described; it is a tragedy to which eighteenth-century writers will be found constantly recurring, and it belongs not to one age but to every age and perhaps not least to our own.

Yet the desire for happiness lies so deep it cannot be gainsaid; in a pleasure-loving age it was essential to find for young girls some less perilous satisfaction than those commonly resorted to. For this reason Fénelon develops a philosophy of simple pleasures:

'Let us be afraid', he says, 'of those great Convulsions of the Soul which prepare Disquiets and Disgusts and do proceed from Excesses. . . . They are more especially to be feared for Children, who can less resist what they feel and who are naturally carried to Briskness and Liveliness of Action. Let's labour to continue in them a Relish for plain things: by allowing neither great Preparations of Victuals to nourish, or of Sports to recreate them. . . . With the help of this Temperance, in which consists the Health both of Body and Soul, our young Lady is always in a sweet and moderate Joy; there is no need of fine Machines or Sights, Theatrical Pomps or Expenses to recreate her; a little Play which she may invent herself; a pretty instructive Reading; a Labour which is by herself freely undertaken; a Walk, or a little innocent Conversation which relaxes the Mind after hard Labour; leave a purer Joy in her than that of the most charming Musick, or the most exquisite and studied Diversion. . . .'[2]

Another fault of which girls and women are constantly accused, arising from their dependent position and the

[1] Hickes, p. 12.

[2] Ib., loc. cit., p. 59.

'slavish' education of centuries, leads them into 'a little sort of Craftiness and petty Cunning. . . . They have been educated to know no better a Prudence.' Consequently it is of great importance to teach girls to have no fear of speaking out frankly and ingenuously; 'they should not be forc'd to appear as if they had a Liking for some Persons or for some Books which in reality they have not.'[1] It should be one of a teacher's greatest endeavours to make a child in love with sincerity, by first securing her confidence. 'A melancholy and frightful Idea of Virtue, which they retain all their lives after, is often-times all that remains of a severe Education.'[2] To the repulsive and disabling nature of Fear and its companion Dissimulation, which actually weaken the power of the soul, Fénelon constantly refers; the watchwords of his argument throughout are Joy and Confidence. 'What is there', he says in a fine passage, 'more sweet or more convenient than to be sincere, Open-hearted, always Quiet, always at Peace with ourselves and others, and having nothing to Fear or to invent; whereas dissembling Persons are continually in Agitation, in Remorse, in Danger and in the deplorable Necessity of covering one Craft by an Hundred others.'[3] The best comment on his words was probably the long history of women's education that lay behind him.

So careful a student of the child's mind was not slow to point out the necessity of being 'content to follow and assist nature', and of using natural inclinations to further the course of education. How valuable to the teacher could childish curiosity, and eagerness to imitate, be made; 'in all the Ages of our Life Example had a most wonderful Power of us, but in Childhood it can do everything'.[4] Of another characteristic he writes with the sympathy of a child-lover;

'Children are passionately in love with ludicrous Stories; they are seen daily transported with Joy or bedewed with Tears at the Relation of those Adventures which are told them: Fail not to

[1] Ib., pp. 186–7.
[2] Ib., p. 43.
[3] Ib., p. 189.
[4] Ib., p. 124.

make good use of this Propension: . . . When you have told a Fable or Story wait till the Child ask you to tell more; thus will you leave in her always a kind of Appetite to learn farther. . . . Enliven your Relations with quick and familiar Tones; make all your Persons to speak: Children who have a quick Imagination will believe they see and hear them. For instance, recount to them the History of Joseph: make his Brethren speak like Churls, and Jacob like a Tender and afflicted Father: let Joseph himself give an Account how he takes Pleasure, being Master in Ægypt, to hide himself from his Brethren, to put them in a Fear and then to discover himself: This lively Representation, join'd with the Surprisingness of this History, will charm a Child, provided that you do not burthen her too much with like Relations; . . . that you promise them too for Reward when she shall be Good; that you give them not a studied Air; and that you do not oblige her to repeat them: Those repetitions, at least if they be not led to them of themselves, torture Children, and take away from them all the Pleasure they would otherwise find in these sorts of Histories.'[1]

Neither is Fénelon unaware of the value of cultivating the dramatic sense: where there are several pupils, they may, little by little, be accustomed to represent 'the Persons of the Histories' which they are studying: 'one must be Abraham, the other Isaac, this Sarah and that Rebecca: These Representations will charm them more than other Plays, will accustom them to think and speak of serious Matters with Pleasure, and will render these Histories fixed in their Memories beyond the Danger of being lost. . . .'[2]

At certain points Locke, whose *Thoughts on Education* followed the *Traité* after an interval of five years, was indebted to Fénelon's views, expressed here or in his *Telemachus*. Both writers held strongly that lessons should not be made exacting tasks: 'Suffer Children to play, and endeavour to mix Instruction with their Sport; so that Wisdom may not be discover'd to them but by Intervals and with a smiling Countenance'; 'No Liberty, no Play, no Jocundness; always Lesson, Silence, Forced Postures, Corrections, Threatnings, instead of doing any good do

[1] Hickes, pp. 75–7. [2] Ib., p. 78.

but spoil all'; 'It would be ridiculous when Compulsion and Blows have rais'd an Aversion in the Child to his Task to expect he should freely of his own accord leave his Play and with Pleasure court the Occasions of Learning: whereas, were Matters order'd right, learning anything they should be taught might be made as much a Recreation to their Play as their Play is to their Learning'; such sentiments might be attributed indiscriminately to either writer.

Both, again, understood the value of indirect instruction. Fénelon thought the fewer formal lessons that were given the better; teaching more valuable than any set task could be insinuated into the most gay and free conversations.[1] Locke believed children could be taught to read 'without perceiving it to be anything but a sport'.[2] The ingenious spelling-games he contrived, by means of an angular ivory ball with letters pasted on the sides,[3] may be compared with Fénelon's suggestion of 'Two or Three Alphabets of Letters Engraven on Copper-Plates, with double Lines having Whites betwixt, which the Children would be striving to fill; and then when they have made them would be inquisite to know what they are'.[4] Both had learnt by experience the advantage of illustrated lesson-books, 'if his Æsop has Pictures in it, it will entertain him much the better, and encourage him to read, when it carries the Increase of Knowledge with it.'[5] Fénelon thought that pictures, cuts, or maps made the best prizes, and went so far as to say that a little girl's book ought to be 'well bound, gilded on the Back and Edges, with fine Cuts, and Printed in a very good Character. Everything that rejoices or enlivens the Imagination facilitates Study'.[6] Above all these great educationists agreed on the fundamental necessity for the study of character and aptitudes, of 'the natural make of the mind',

[1] Ib., p. 51. [2] Locke, loc. cit., p. 130. [3] Ib., p. 131.

[4] Hickes, p. 53. Dr. Watts, incapable himself of inventing useful pastimes, desired that 'some of the sons of ingenuity had science and virtue so much at heart as to attempt such a service to mankind'.

[5] Locke, p. 133. [6] Hickes, p. 51.

or, in Fénelon's words, 'the Graces of Childhood'. The difficult and diffident child especially is to them a problem calling not for neglect or contempt but for double care on the teacher's part, for sympathetic insight and an untiring patience.

As we meet with ideals so far in advance of contemporary methods, the methods of the boarding-school and the dancing-master, it is inevitable to inquire how Fénelon proposed, at this stage, to find governesses of 'a Judgment, a Patience, a Talent, very extraordinary',[1] who could carry his theories into practice. Good education is impossible with an inexpert and ill-instructed teacher; Fénelon is well aware of this stumbling-block; having developed his system and set it out in full, he takes the practical course of summarizing, in fifty maxims, its underlying principles for the guidance of the inexperienced governess. In his opinion these principles will present no insuperable difficulty to any one of average capacity; 'to expect from such an ordinary Person that she should have at least a tolerable good Sense, a tractable Humour and a true Fear of God, is not, I think, to require too much'.[2] As the character and temper of the governess are all important, the choice should be made carefully and after exact inquiries;

'Endeavour to form her betimes for this Employment; and keep her some time near you to try her before you trust her with so precious a Treasure. But Five or Six Governesses form'd after this Manner would be capable of forming in a little time a great Number of others. There would be perhaps disappointment in some of them; but out of this Number there would be always enough to make amends; and we should not be put to that extream Perplexity as we generally are nowadays.'[3]

More than a century and a half was still to pass in England before any systematized attempt for the training of governesses was made. There were in the meantime some excellent schoolmistresses, with natural capacity

[1] Hickes, p. 272. [2] Ib., p. 275.
[3] Ib., p. 278.

and a love of their calling, but they were few and far between. The majority of women-teachers were held in small esteem, were ill-qualified, and worse paid. The author of *Chickens feed Capons* (1731) declares that children have no respect for their teachers, and this is not to be wondered at, for in great families they are put contemptuously on a footing with the servants.[1] In 1725 Mary Lovell, a wealthy twelve-year-old orphan, living with her guardian in Coleman Street, had an establishment provided out of her allowance of £600 a year for maintenance and education, and her 'distinct Family' consisted of 'a Teacher with a Sallary of Twenty pounds per annum, a Chamber-Maid, Cook-Maid, Coachman and Footman, with a Coach and pair of Horses for her separate use'.[2] Even a century after Fénelon drew up his scheme, Hannah More's sisters, in their Bristol boarding-school, spent all their leisure in teaching the governesses to read and spell.[3]

To his translation of Fénelon's *Traité* Dr. Hickes added from *Telemachus* a full-length portrait, 'the Character of a Vertuous Young Lady of the first Quality, form'd after this model', an idealized picture which anticipated Rousseau's Sophie in its emphasis on the charm of amiability, naturalness, and simplicity, and in the curious absence of any reference to the cultivation of the mind.[4]

3. *Isaac Watts*

In 1725 appeared an educational work entirely English in conception, the *Treatise on the Education of Children and Youth* of Dr. Isaac Watts. Fénelon had pointed out two general considerations of importance in girls' education; namely, the temperament of the pupil, and the due correla-

[1] *Chickens feed Capons: or a Dissertation on the Pertness of our Youth in general, especially those trained up at Tea-tables . . . not forgetting the Insolence and Scorn with which the generality of young Persons treat their Elders and Betters* (1731), p. 20.

[2] *Repertory*, 130; cf. 337 (London Guildhall Records).

[3] W. Roberts, *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Hannah More* (1838), p. 117.

[4] Cf. Hickes, p. 284.

tion of her knowledge and her duties in life. The opening section of Dr. Watts's *Essay* introduces a point of view which had been taken up very positively since the appearance of the earlier book. Fénelon did not envisage any education but that of a young gentlewoman: Dr. Watts makes his position at the outset unmistakably clear. 'Persons of better circumstances in the world', he declares, 'should give their sons and their daughters a much larger share of knowledge, and a richer variety of instruction than meaner persons can or ought. But every child . . . hath a right to be taught by its parents, according to their best ability, so much as is necessary for its well-being both in body and soul, here and hereafter.'[1] This theory of limitation by accident of birth and not by capacity to learn, in its bearing on the Charity Schools is elsewhere discussed. In his concluding sentence the good doctor really gave the lie to all he had enunciated before; and indeed conscientious qualms about the claims of children of genius, in whatever rank of life, were felt by right-minded men and women, more and more acutely, as time wore on. Apart from this premise, Dr. Watts's contribution to the improvement of girls' education is thoughtful and of some value and the curriculum he is prepared to accept surprisingly varied. He recommends for both sexes the study of Mathematics, including Algebra and Geometry, and of Geography and Astronomy. 'The knowledge of the lines and circles of the globes of heaven and earth', he affirms, 'is counted so necessary in our age, that no person of either sex is now esteemed to have an elegant education without them.'[2] As to Geography,

'It is almost necessary for young persons who pretend to anything of instruction and schooling above the lowest rank of people, to get a little acquaintance with the several parts of land and sea, that they may know in what quarter of the world the chief cities and countries are situated; that at the mention of the word Copenhagen they may not grossly blunder and expose themselves, as a certain gentleman once did by supposing it to be the name of a Dutch

[1] Watts, p. 358. [2] Ib., p. 376.

commander. Without this knowledge we cannot read any history with profit nor so much as understand the common newspapers.'[1]

He advises some acquaintance with good poetry—though not verse-making for all; singing for those who have a musical ear and voice—though he dislikes the fashionable song of the 'amorous kind'; the study of wind and string instruments; drawing and painting; even dancing, as 'a modish accomplishment of both sexes'. In the direction of religious teaching it is of interest to hear from this most wide-minded of Puritans, in whom the child-lover strove with the dissenter, a warning against books which tend to make 'a deep and frightful impression on tender minds'. Foxe's book is to be banished the children's library: 'there is no need', in the writer's view, 'that the history of the holy confessors and martyrs should be set before their thoughts so early in all their most ghastly shapes and colours. These things when they are a little older may be of excellent use, to discover to them the wicked and bloody principles of persecution . . . and to teach them the power of the grace of Christ.'[2]

When girls reach the age of leaving school Dr. Watts deprecates their being left to an idle aimless round of pleasure, as the custom too often is.

'What business of life', he asks, 'must daughters be brought up too? . . . When I have seen so many of the sex who have lived well in . . . childhood, grievously exposed to . . .poverty upon the death of their parents, I have often wished there were more of the callings or employments of life peculiarly appropriated to women, and that they were regularly educated in them, that there might be a better provision made for their support. What if all the garments which are worn by women were so limited . . . in the manufacture of them that they should all be made only by their own sex? . . . And what if some of the easier labours of life were reserved for them only? . . .[3]

Such counsels, if not at all points acceptable to the convinced feminist, are the voice of sanity and kindness sounding in the midst of a troubled world. At the close of his *Essay* the author devotes to the proper degrees of

[1] Ib., p. 377. [2] Ib., p. 380. [3] Ib., p. 372.

Liberty and Restraint in the Education of Daughters, a section which contains an illuminating picture of contemporary education. The chapter is illustrated by contrasted word-pictures of two mothers, and their methods in educating a family of daughters, descriptions which compare favourably with those, far more widely known, in Law's *Serious Call.*

Watts's 'Antigone' was brought up by her grandmother on the narrow and austere lines of the seventeenth-century Puritan family: this filled her with such resentment that she determined to bring up her own daughters in the opposite course.

'In my younger times', said she, 'we were kept hard to the labour of the needle, and spent six hours a day at it, as though I were to get my bread by my finger-ends, but a little of that business shall serve these children, for their father has left them good fortunes of their own. We were not suffered to read anything but the Bible and sermon-books; but I shall teach mine politer lessons out of plays and romances, that they may be acquainted with the world betimes. . . . We were taught to play the good housewife in the kitchen and the pastry and were well instructed in the conduct of the broom and the duster; but we knew nothing of the mode of the court and the diversions of the town. I should be ashamed to see these young creatures that are under my care so awkward in company at fourteen as I was at four-and-twenty.'[1]

The result of her experiment is an unenviable precocity; her children are empty-headed, and without respect for the mother they scorn and neglect. Phronissa, the other parent, is fortunately better able to hold the balance between 'the severity of the last age and the wild licence of this'. When her daughters were little children she spent some hours daily in the nursery, and 'taught the young creatures to recite many a pretty passage out of the Bible before they were capable of reading it for themselves; yet at six years old they read the Scriptures with ease'.[2] They were 'bred up skilful in all the plain and flowery arts of the needle; but it was never made a task nor a toil to them,

[1] Watts, p. 401. [2] Ib., p. 403.

nor did they waste their hours in those nice and tedious works which cost our female ancestors seven years of their life and stitches without number. To render this exercise pleasant, one of them always entertained the company with some useful author while the rest were at work'. The gayer accomplishments of song and dance were not forgotten, nor the social arts of agreeable conversation and dress, but each was given its due place in Phronissa's scheme; she 'managed the restraint of their younger years with so much reason and love that they have seemed all their lives to know nothing but liberty'.[1]

4. *Some Characteristics of the Period*

In describing the education of Antigone's daughters Dr. Watts points an accusing finger at defects condemned again and again by writers of judgement less reliable than his, which were plainly the outstanding evidences of failure. For example, all agree upon the prevalence of an unnatural precocity: Dr. Watts's description has the precision of a careful observer. Antigone's young daughters

'under their mother's eye, could manage the tea-table at ten years old. . . . At fourteen they learned the airs of the world; they gad abroad at their pleasure and will hardly suffer Antigone to direct or go with them; they despise the old woman betimes, for they can visit without her attendance and prattle abundantly without her prompting . . . they can talk love-stories out of Cleopatra: they are well practised already in the arts of scandal. . . . They have been taught so little to set a guard upon themselves that their virtue is much suspected. But, be that as it will, they are seized and married before sixteen, being tempted away to bind themselves for life to a laced coat and a fashionable wig.'[2]

Steele, in the *Tatler*, comments on the same feature of the times; one of his correspondents seeks advice about the nine-year-old daughter whom he wishes to send to a boarding-school. His wife opposes the idea, on the ground that Miss is too much a woman already, and understands the formalities of visiting and the tea-table better than many

[1] Ib., p. 405. [2] Ib., p. 402.

much older than herself. 'With all these perfections', adds the aggrieved father, 'the girl can scarce thread a needle.'[1] The author of *Chickens feed Capons* complains in a petulant tone of the lack of discipline among the young; owing to parental indulgence:

> Now little Miss in Hanging-Sleeves knows more
> Than formerly her Grandma at three-score.[2]

'Instead of Babies, Play-Things and other pretty innocencies used of old', the protest runs,

'our Girls at 10 or 11 years of Age keep their select Companies and treat 'em with as much Solemnity and Expence as their Parents do their own Acquaintance; this prevails not only at Court but in the City . . . there is as much Fuss made at some Houses against such a Miss or such a Miss comes to visit the Daughter as if a Duchess was expected . . . when the Visit is returned she must be dress'd up to the heighth of the Mode and some new Thing or other is always wanted: Not to mention Top-Knots, Gloves, Coach-hire and other avoidable Expences. This is most criminal in those who cannot afford it. Such People would therefore do well to reduce their Children to the Old Standard; that is to say make Scholars of their Boys and Housewives of their Girls; for the Education above complained has spoil'd many a good Tradesman's Wife and been the Ruin of many a Family. . . .[3]

Another subject of comment, namely, the miserable illiteracy of the average gentlewoman, no doubt had its origin in a curtailed education and too early introduction into society; young girls had only too much reason speedily to forget any little smattering of letters they might have received. Steele, in his *Ladies' Library* (1714), writes of women of wit and politeness who could not pronounce the words correctly when they read aloud, but were guilty of childish mistakes, and read hesitatingly and in a tiresome sing-song.

'Their Deficiencies in Spelling', he adds, 'are become so fashionable that to spell well is, among the fair Sex, reckon'd a sort of Pedantry; they are taught a little more care in Writing a good Hand; but

[1] *Tatler*, No. 141 (*Brit. Essayists*, R. Lynam, 1827, vol. ii).
[2] *Chickens feed Capons*, p. 17.
[3] Ib., p. 18.

that care goes no farther than the making their Letters; the connecting them, and an orderly placing their Words in streight Lines is what they are for the most Part utterly Strangers to. . . .'[1]

'It is a little hard', wrote Swift, some thirteen years later, 'that not one gentleman's daughter in a thousand should be brought up to read or understand her own natural tongue or judge of the easiest books that are written in it'[2] . . . and he urged the 'very young lady'[3] to whom, on her marriage, his admonitions were addressed, as she valued her happiness to improve her mind and to render herself intellectually a fit companion for her husband.

The most remarkable instance at this period of ignorance in high places was Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, for many years the most able and influential woman in England. Although, in Hannah More's words, 'she had the pride of being thought learned as well as rich and beautiful' and cherished in her library the works, duly autographed, of all the great authors of her day;[4] although she affected the fashionable taste for music and the Italian opera;[5] she was not merely ill-educated but almost illiterate. She knew no language but her own and that she could not write nor spell correctly.[6] To arithmetic she was a stranger, although her biographer describes a method of her own invention which she employed in calculating her money-matters: 'To onlookers it appeared as if a child had scribbled over the paper, setting down figures here and there at random; yet every sum came right to a fraction at last.' . . .[7]

[1] *The Ladies' Library, Written by a Lady* (1714), p. 17.

[2] *Select Works of Jonathan Swift* (1825), vol. i, p. 233. Cf. 'The Furniture of a Woman's Mind' (vol. i, p. 208):

> Her learning mounts to read a song
> But half the words pronouncing wrong.

[3] The lady is said to have been Lady Betty Moore, on her marriage with Mr. George Rochfort; see *Prose Works* (Bohn, vol. xi), note, p. 115.

[4] *Life*, loc. cit., p. 78.

[5] *Memoirs of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough*, by Mrs. A. T. Thomson (1839), vol. i, p. 341.

[6] Ib., p. 468.

[7] Ib., vol. ii, p. 310.

While the fashionable education, or lack of education, thus tended to produce a feather-brained and emotional type of young woman, contemporary literature heaped scorn indiscriminately on the system and on its victims. Never was there a time when the criticism of society-ladies and of all who aped their manners was fiercer or more contemptuous. Instances could be multiplied but two or three must suffice. Lord Halifax—who held the unalterable conviction that 'there is Inequality in the Sexes and that for the better Œconomy of the World, Men, who were to be the Law-givers had the larger share of Reason bestow'd upon them'[1]—drew, by way of warning, for his newly married daughter, a caustic picture of contemporary manners (1699). Some of his remarks Steele incorporated (as usual without acknowledgement) in the *Ladies' Library*.

'Ladies', the words run, '. . . live in a Circle of Idleness, where they turn round for the whole year without the Interruption of a serious Hour; they know what Plays are on the Stocks, what Singers are come or coming from Italy; No Trooper is more obedient to the Sound of his Captain's Trumpet than they are to that which summons them to a Puppet Show or a Monster. The Spring that brings out Flies and Fools drives them to Hide Park. In Winter they are an incumbrance to the Theaters and the Ballad of the Drawing-Room; . . . the Ladies grow cheap by growing Familiar and cheap is the unkindest word that can be bestow'd upon the Sex. . . .'[2]

The attitude of women towards these cruel attacks deserves careful observation. From the society butterfly one expects no philosophy of life; the defenders of their sex are as a rule blameless on the score of frivolous living, and of more than average parts and education. The leading protagonist of this age, Mary Astell (b. 1688), was the daughter of a Newcastle merchant, well-instructed in her girlhood according to the standards of her day. An uncle who noted her excellent abilities gave her tuition in philosophy, mathematics, and logic, while she studied

[1] *Advice to a Daughter, by the late noble M. of H.* (1699), p. 26.
[2] *Ladies' Library*, p. 60. Cf. *Advice*, p. 157.

Latin on her own account.[1] Her most striking work, *A Serious Proposal*, which roused many slumbering consciences by its ring of earnestness, was addressed 'To the Ladies' and designed 'to improve their Charms and heighten their Value by suffering them no longer to be cheap and contemptible'.[2] Mrs. Astell's first desire was to raise the standard of self-respect, to make women believe themselves capable of nobler things than 'pursuing butterflies and trifles'. 'There is a sort of Bravery and Greatness of Soul', she says in a passage characteristic of her best writing, 'which does more truly ennoble us than the highest Title, and it consists in living up to the dignity of our Natures, being so sensible of our own worth as to think ourselves too great to do a degenerate and unbecoming thing. . . . This is the richest ornament and renders a Woman glorious in the lowest Fortune.'[3]

The mean opinion women held of themselves,[4] their belief that they were 'incapable of great attainments,[5] was the chief obstacle in the way of progress; the hypothesis, which had actually been refuted along the ages, that they were 'predetermined to folly', kept them grovelling to earth. For their sickness of heart Mary Astell endeavoured with all her powers of persuasion to find a remedy. 'The Incapacity,' she wrote, 'if there be any, is acquired, not natural, and none of their Follies are so necessary but that they might avoid them themselves.'[6] The first, if not the whole, cause of their defects in character, is a mistaken Education; 'like an Error in the first Concoction [it] spreads its ill Influence through all our lives.[7] . . . Ignorance and a narrow Education lay the Foundation of Vice, and Imitation and Custom rear it up.'[8] Mary Astell's proposals for the foundation of a monastic college where women might themselves be taught and might teach a

[1] Ballard, p. 445. [2] Ib.

[3] *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies . . . by a Lover of her Sex* (1697), Part I, p. 108.

[4] Cf. *Ladies' Library*, p. 25.

[5] Cf. *Essays Upon Several Subjects*, by Mary, Lady Chudleigh (1710), 'Essay on Knowledge', p. 5.

[6] *Serious Proposal*, Part I, p. 15. [7] Ib., p. 16. [8] Ib., p. 27.

younger generation, have elsewhere been described. It was an attempt to make a little world within the world, an attempt which, like the nunnery in the Middle Ages, seemed the only way of escape for the woman who valued her own soul; 'to what heights of Piety will she not advance who is plac'd where the sole business is to be good . . . no pleasure but in Religion . . . where her Soul is not defil'd nor her Zeal provok'd by the sight or relation of those Villanies the World abounds with. . . .'[1]

The unfairness of the whole position lay in the fact that the same public opinion which condemned the ignorant woman held the learned woman, the 'Female Virtuoso', in detestation. Even writers like Swift, Steele, and Addison, who championed the women's cause, were always on the alert for any symptom of 'pride in learning', and the line they drew between illiteracy and a sufficiency of instruction was exceedingly ill-defined. 'Those who are commonly called learned women', wrote Swift to Lady Betty Moore, 'have lost all manner of credit by their impertinent talkativeness and conceit of themselves; but there is an easy remedy for this, if you once consider that after all the pains you may be at, you can never arrive in point of learning to the perfection of a schoolboy.'[2] While the *Spectator* desired the management of a young lady's mind to be by no means overlooked, it scoffed at the shopkeeper's wife who had learnt Greek, and was, in her husband's view, already 'too mad for Bedlam'.[3] Toland also noticed the readiness of English society to 'clutter' about a woman who once in her life happened to pry into books and became ('as 'tis a thousand to one she does not') troublesome or affected or ridiculous.[4] The serious-minded women were in terror of being thought intellectual, and suffered from gossiping innuendoes, 'the reports of nurses and maids, that their Lady was indeed a Woman of very odd Whimsies'. 'The best Fate', adds Lady Masham,

[1] *Serious Proposal*, Part I, p. 75.
[2] Swift, *Works*, loc. cit., p. 233.
[3] *Spectator*, No. 278 (vol. iv, p. 151, ed. 1819).
[4] *Letters to Serena*, by Mr. Toland (1704), Preface, par. 5.

'which a Lady knowing and singular could expect, would be that hardly escaping Calumny she should be in Town the Jest of the *Would-be-Witts*, the wonder of Fools and a Scarecrow to keep from her House many honest People.' In the country-side, 'her prudent conduct and Management of her Affairs would probably secure her from being thought out of her Wits by her near Neighbours; but the Country gentleman that wish'd her well could not yet chuse but be afraid for her, lest too much Learning might in Time make her Mad'.[1]

The nervousness of the better sort of women, rather than an exaggerated modesty, led them to shrink from the abuse, the vulgar witticisms, which inevitably followed their acknowledgement of any serious piece of authorship. Mary Astell preserved her anonymity as strictly as a particularly distinctive style would allow; 'my darling my beloved Obscurity, which I court and doat on above all Earthly Blessings'[2] she called it, and refused to allow the use even of her initials: at least she could thus ensure freedom of speech to pronounce the 'bold truths' which 'pass while the Speaker is Incognito but are seldom endur'd when he is known'.[3] Catharine Trotter (Mrs. Cockburn), the authoress of *Agnes de Castro*, a tragedy, published anonymously her *Vindication of Mr. Locke's Christian Principle*, because a woman's name at once created a prejudice against a book of this kind.[4] The popular dislike of professional authorship in women was probably accentuated by such scurrilous books as Mrs. Manly's *New Atlantis*: even Lady Mary Wortley Montagu expresses her pity for Sarah Fielding, 'constrained . . . to seek her bread by a method I do not doubt she despises'.[5] Women were out of favour with polite society; respect was lacking;

[1] *Occasional Thoughts, in reference to a Vertuous or Christian Life* (1795), p. 198 [written 'some years since'].

[2] *Letters Concerning the Love of God, between the Author of the Proposal to the Ladies and Mr. John Norris* (1695), Preface, p. 3.

[3] *Some Reflections upon Marriage* (1700), Preface.

[4] *Works of Catharine Cockburn* (1751), vol. ii, p. 155.

[5] *Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (1817), vol. iv, p. 265.

gallantries rang hollow and too often concealed a sneer. While the gentlewoman shook off restraint, affected the hoyden, or danced and gamed along the road to speedy ruin, many writers openly regretted a generation which had never known the present 'unaccountably wild' method of education. Steele himself, tired of pertness, of being slapped on the shoulders and styled 'you old thief' by some underbred miss, gave vent to his feelings in an eloquent lament for departed grace and beauty:

'The fine women they shew me now-a-days', he wrote in 1709, 'are at best but pretty girls to me who have seen Sacharissa, when all the world repeated the poems she inspired; and Villaria when a youthful king was her subject. The *things* you follow and make songs on now should be sent to knit, or sit down to bobbins and bone-lace; they are indeed neat, and so are their sempstresses; they are pretty, and so are their handmaids. But that graceful motion, that awful mien, and that winning attraction which grew upon them from the thoughts and conversation they met with in my time, are no more seen. They tell me I am old: I am glad I am so: for I do not like your present young ladies.'[1]

5. *The Serious Women*

One reason for suspicion of the Female Virtuoso was no doubt the increased intellectual vigour with which Mary Astell, Lady Masham, and their fellows were making incursions into regions hitherto unexplored, such as Natural Philosophy, Science, and Mathematics. Dr. Watts, writing in 1725, approved of these subjects for both sexes; indeed he preferred them to modern languages.[2] Mary, Lady Chudleigh, the wife of a Devonshire squire, fifteen years earlier, had also held that languages should be left to the Grammarian and niceties of style to the Rhetorician: 'Women should endeavour', she said, 'to get an insight into the useful Parts of Learning and attend more to Things than Words . . . let us be sollicitous only for the Substance, . . . the Knowledge of God and our Selves.' In order to survey the harmony of the Universe, and so be

[1] *Tatler*, loc. cit., vol. i, No. 61.

[2] *Supra*, p. 372.

led to God; and the operations of mind and intellect, so to attain self-mastery; the most fruitful avenues are the study of Logic, Geometry, Physics, Metaphysics, History, and Geography, with Maps, Ancient and Modern, Moral Philosophy, and Ethics.[1] The course she recommends to others the writer herself has had no opportunity of pursuing; 'I know only so much', she declares, 'as to make me bewail the want of [such sciences]; they are like the Glories of the Sky, things I admire but cannot reach. Were I to live my life over again I would make them my early study.'[2] In such a passage the influence of Locke requires no comment; his philosophy, especially in its bearing on the problems of religion, captivated the imagination of many thoughtful women; an irresistible rival, to song and dance, even to French and Italian, for a time at least came upon the scene.

Among the earliest of Locke's disciples should probably be reckoned 'The Learned and Ingenious Mrs. Anne Baynard', as she is styled by John Prude, her eulogist. She was the only child of Dr. Edward Baynard, a distinguished physician and surgeon practising in the City of London. Dr. Baynard was a great lover of books: the catalogue of his library, sold at the King's Arms Tavern, Covent Garden, in 1721, shows that he possessed some three hundred volumes in Greek, Latin, French, and Italian, covering a wide range of subjects.[3] Anne had thus an inherited taste for scholarship, a learned education, and ample opportunities for study, of which she made full use. She seems to have been a strange, melancholy creature, with a thoughtful brow, whose mind speedily outwore her frail body; a spiritual kinswoman of Emily Brontë in her grave taciturnity, her reserved and stoical disposition —she had a great admiration for the Stoic philosophers —and her simplicity of life. Like the Elizabethan ladies, she learnt Greek that she might read her Testament and the works of St. Chrysostom, and disputed with the

[1] *Essays upon Several Subjects*, loc. cit., p. 9. [2] Ib., p. 13.
[3] *Catalogue of Books in Dr. Baynard's Library* (1721), *passim*.

Socinians of her time in 'severe satyrs written in the Latin tongue'.[1]

When most women of her standing were preoccupied with the fashions, her dress was of the plainest; 'she had business that lay upon her hands of another Nature; she had many Books to read, many Doubts and Difficulties to clear up to her understanding and much time to lay out in devout and serious Meditation'.[2] Like Mary Astell, she was a loyal and instructed daughter of the Church of England; like her she coveted 'more and more knowledge' for it was a sin to be contented with a little; and like her she believed in the capacity of her own sex, could their thirst for righteousness but once be aroused. Melancholy grew upon her, induced no doubt by her physical delicacy; she took her solitary walks in Barnes churchyard, and sat to rest in the porch, ruminating on her mortality, and in love with the place where some instinct told her she would soon come to lie.[3] She died of a wasting fever in her twenty-third year, that is in 1697, seven years after the publication of the *Essay on the Human Understanding*. Anne Baynard had a group of women friends who loved, revered, and lamented her. Their names may be commemorated here, if only to emphasize a point of some interest, namely, that in quiet country-places, despised for their back-wood ignorance by the smart and coquettish London ladies, there were many scholarly and thoughtful women, occupying an ample leisure with books and above all with the study and practice of their religion. Anne's friends and kinswomen, for she came of a noble and ancient Essex family, were 'Lady Mary Fane, Lady Catherine Longuevil, Lady Rachel Delves of Dodington in Cheshire, Madam Mary Bampfield of Poultimore in Devon, Madam Diana Montague of Leckham in Wilts, Madam Mary Ewer

[1] Quoted Ballard, p. 356.

[2] *A Sermon at the Funeral of the Learned and Ingenious Mrs. Ann Baynard . . . preached at the Parish Church of Barnes in the County of Surrey, the 16 June 1697*, by John Prude, &c., p. 21.

[3] Ib., p. 28.

of Richmond in Surrey, Madam Catharine Broncker of Stoke in Wilts'.[1]

The two queens, Mary and Anne, it will be remembered, for some seven years of their girlhood, were under the care of a tutor, Dr. Lake, appointed to his office by Dr. Compton, Bishop of London.[2] Compton had taken an active part in compelling the Duke of York to have his children, the daughters of Anne Hyde, educated in the doctrines of the Church of England. His nominee well knew what was expected of him, and performed his office so efficiently that the princesses remained convinced and stedfast churchwomen, even when their position involved them in painful controversy, and as it seemed, in an extreme disloyalty towards their father. 'I beg your Majesty to believe', wrote Mary to James II from the Hague in 1680, 'it is not merely a point of honour which makes me firm in my religion. I owe a great obligation to those of the Anglican Church who took care for me . . . to instruct me in the Religion there professed';[3] Anne, with less spirituality than her sister, was no less constant to her profession; neither threats nor promises, she declared again and again, could ever prevail to make her a convert to the Roman doctrine; 'je suis resoluë à subir plustôt toutes choses que de changer ma Religion, même si l'on le porterait à tels extremités je choisiray plustôt à vivre d'aumônes que de changer. . . .'[4] Nor was the effect of their religious training merely to produce skilled controversialists. Readers of the touching *Memoirs* of Mary II will recall her resolution, when she came to the Throne, to do what lay in her power 'towards macking devotion loockt on as it ought'.[5] The passage throws light on the reverent affection with which her subjects came to regard her. She appealed to the best in them, even though she could not persuade them to keep Sunday holy; her un-

[1] Ib., Preface.

[2] Camden Society, *Miscellany*, vol. i (1847), p. 7.

[3] *Lettres et Mémoires de Marie, Reine d'Angleterre*, ed. Countess M. van Bentinck, 1880, p. 11.

[4] Ib., p. 28.

[5] *Memoirs of Mary, Queen of England*, 1689–93 (ed. Dr. R. Doebner, 1886) p. 12.

worldliness shone out in lovely purity against the background of greed and self-seeking which the court had so long presented. Her innovations—the singing of the prayers in the Royal Chapel, the alterations she brought about in the Coronation office to make it 'an act of devotion', the afternoon sermons at Whitehall—seemed like the tokens of a national regeneration. 'Mistrusting my own heart at this time', wrote the Queen with characteristic humility, 'hearing by all people the generall satisfaction I gave by my exemple (which now again began to flatter me), and especially the sermons in the afternoon, I began seriously to consider how to profit by them, and found the best thing I could do was to write down the Text, and what I could remember, and examine myself upon it.'[1] Religion was the absorbing interest of her life —'Since it has pleased God to take all off my hands by giving me such a husband, I think I ought only to make it my bussiness to serve God and do all the good I can in the world',[2] she notes in her Diary, and again, 'I set myself to the more frequent reading God's word, which I have been but to negligent in of late, so that in Lent and one weeck more I read the whole New Testament through, besides severall select chapters of the Old'.[3]

Bishop Burnet, in his striking picture of his royal mistress, which can but be quoted in his own words, says that apart from the 'best books', and her 'Amazing Understanding in matters of Divinity', Mary bestowed most of her time on

'Books of History, chiefly of the later Ages, particularly those of Her own Kingdoms, as being the most proper to give Her useful instruction. Lively Books, where Wit and Reason gave the Mind a true Entertainment, had much of her time. She was a good Judge as well as a great lover of Poetry. She loved it best when it dwelt on the best Subjects. So tender She was of Poetry, tho' much more of Virtue, that she had a particular Concern in the Defilement or rather the Prostitution of the Muses among us. She made some Steps to the understanding Philosophy and Mathematicks but

[1] *Memoirs of Mary, Queen of England*, 1689–93 (ed. Dr. R. Doebner, 1886), p. 16. [2] Ib., p. 23. [3] Ib., p. 25.

She stopp'd soon: only She went far in natural History and Perspective, as she was very exact in Geography. She thought sublime Things were too high Flights for the Sex, which She oft talked of with a Liberty that was very lively: But She might well be familiar with it, after She had given so effectual a Demonstration of the Improvements it was capable of. Upon the whole Matter, She studied and read more than could be imagined by any who had not known how many of Her Hours were spent in Her Closet. . . .'[1]

The hobbies of the Queen's leisure were 'Architecture and Gardenage', and when her conscience was troubled that these favourite diversions were 'expenceful', she used to say 'Since this employed many hands she hoped it would be forgiven her'. She still found time to give to embroidery, and the Queen's parties when she sat at work with her ladies and one read aloud to the rest 'some Book or Poem that was Lively as well as Instructing', revived an old fashion and helped to create a task for simpler enjoyments in many an English home. The example she set of a constant industry did valuable service in a society where frivolous trifling wasted away so many lives; Burnet asserts that it soon 'wrought on the whole Town to follow it, so that it was become as much the Fashion to Work as it had been formerly to be Idle'. 'In this', he adds, 'which seemed a nothing and was turned by some to be the Subject of Railery, a greater step was made than perhaps everyone was aware of to the bettering of the Age.' The important place which history and geography, poetry, natural history, and gardening, came to hold in the education of the next generation of women was no doubt attributable in some degree to Queen Mary's tastes; 'abundance of women', it was said, 'follow the example of the Court for no other reason but because *they do so*'.[2]

6. *Elizabeth Elstob*

Last, and not least interesting, in the group of which she was probably the most erudite member may be placed

[1] *An Essay on the Memory of the late Queen, by Gilbert, Bishop of Sarum*, p. 79 et seq.

[2] Sir H. Ellis, *Original Letters of Eminent Literary Men* (Camd. Soc., 1843), p. 311.

the scholarly Elizabeth Elstob, who links together the age of Anne and the early Georgian period through her relations with Queen Caroline. Like Mary Astell, she was born at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in 1683, the daughter of an ancient family. Her mother was a great admirer of learning, and, noticing her child's taste for study, before she died, when Elizabeth was only eight years old, began her linguistic education. After her death, the girl was for a time forbidden to study, 'through a vulgar mistaken notion of her guardian that one tongue was enough for a woman'.[1] She received, however, much encouragement from Dr. Hickes and from her brother, William Elstob, ten years older than herself. To the former, both brother and sister owed the special bent of their studies towards the so-called 'English Saxon' tongue; Nichols remarks, that Elizabeth Elstob was 'the first English woman that had ever attempted that antient and obsolete language'—and, he goes on to say, 'I suppose also the last'. In the Preface to her translation of the *Homily on the Birthday of St. Gregory* she gives an account of the motives which turned her thoughts in this unusual direction, and anticipates the comment her book may be expected to arouse: 'Admit a woman may have Learning, is there no other kind of Learning to employ her time? What is this Saxon? What has she to do with this barbarous antiquated Stuff? so useless, so altogether out of the way?' In her opinion, 'the charge of Barbarity would rather fall upon those who, while they fancy themselves adorn'd with the Embellishments of foreign Learning, are ignorant, even to barbarity, of the Faith, Religion, the Laws and Customs and Language of their Ancestors'. 'I assure you', she continues, 'these are Considerations which have afforded me no small Encouragement in the Prosecution of these Studies.'[2] No less did she regard as a great advantage to be reaped from Saxon Learning, the assurance that the

[1] Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. iv [No. 111, The Elstobs], p. 128.

[2] *An English-Saxon Homily on the Birthday of St. Gregory anciently used in the English Saxon Church, &c.*, by Elizabeth Elstob (1709), Preface, p. v.

Reformed Church of England was one with the ancient Saxon Church, 'no new church but the same it was before the Roman Church was corrupted'.[1] Her interest in Old English was first aroused by a desire to understand Alfred's version of Orosius, of which her brother was about to publish a specimen. 'Having gained the Alphabet', she remarks, 'I found it so easy and in it so much of the grounds of our present Language and of a more particular Agreement with some Words which I had heard when very young in the North, as drew me to be more inquisitive after Books written in that Language.' She read many treatises and diverted herself by transcribing such ancient manuscripts as she could procure. Dr. Hickes, 'the great Instaurator of Northern Literature',[2] accepted and made use of her copy of the Athanasian Creed, and never ceased to encourage her in study and to urge her that 'by publishing somewhat in Saxon [she] wou'd invite the Ladies to be acquainted with the Language of their Predecessors and the Original of their Mother-Tongue'.

Learned men like Dr. Hudson, Bodley's Librarian, gave her facilities for comparing the transcript of her St. Gregory with 'that antient Parchment Book of Homilies . . . amongst Junius's Books', and showed towards her 'that generous Quality to be found only in those great Minds that are inform'd with a truly Scholar-like Genius—of not discouraging Learning even in our Sex.'[3] After William Elstob left Oxford, he was appointed by the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury to the city benefice of St. Swithin and St. Mary Bothaw, where his sister shared his home and his hours of study.[4]

She assisted him in his projected edition of the Saxon Laws, and in 1709 published on her own account an English translation of the *Homily on the Birthday of St. Gregory*, already referred to, to which he added a Latin

[1] Ib., Preface, p. xiii.

[2] He was author of the portentously named *Linguarum veterum septentrionalium thesaurus grammatico-criticus et archaeologicus*, 1703–5.

[3] Preface, p. lvii.

[4] *Autobiography and Correspondence of Mrs. Delany*, First Series, vol. i, p. 261.

version, with a dedication 'sorori suae carissimae'. Her portrait, that of a plain young woman with intelligent eyes, is inserted in the capital G with which the English version opens; St. Gregory in his mitre occupies the corresponding initial in the Saxon original. She transcribed hymns and canticles from an ancient manuscript in Salisbury Cathedral; her transcript of the *Textus Roffensis* is said to be 'the most lovely specimen of modern Saxon writing that can be imagined'.[1] In 1715 she published her *Rudiments of Grammar for the English Saxon Tongue, first given in English: with an Apology for the Study of Northern Antiquities, being very useful towards the understanding our antient English Poets and other Writers.* Dr. Hickes advised her next to print the Saxon Homilies with an English translation and notes, and, to meet the heavy outlay involved, she applied for a grant-in-aid to Queen Anne's Bounty: 'I cannot but wish', wrote Hickes at this time, 'that for her own sake, as well as for the advancement of the Septentrional learning and for the honour of our English-Saxon ancestors, the service of the Church of England, the credit of our country and the honour of her sex, that learned and most studious gentlewoman may find such encouragement as she and her great undertaking deserve'.[2] The Queen's death, however, brought the project to an untimely close; five or more of the Homilies were printed at Oxford in a 'pompous folio', but the work was never published and a few unfinished copies were finally sold off to some bookseller. The happy days of study and congenial companionship were brought to a close by William Elstob's death in 1715. Whatever competence his sister had once possessed had vanished 'by pursuing too much the drug called learning'; she did not know how to manage money.[3] She was proud, and rather than sink to dependence on the bounty of generous friends, she went into retirement at Evesham, changed her name,[4] and in great poverty tried

[1] Nichols, loc. cit., pp. 130, 138.
[2] Ib., loc. cit., p. 132.
[3] Delany, p. 262.
[4] Nichols, p. 714.

to eke out a living by teaching poor children to read and write. Her weekly income from this school amounted at first to but a groat, and she scarcely had time to eat, much less for study, while a friend to whom she had entrusted her manuscripts and books went to the West Indies and was heard of no more.[1]

She became acquainted with George Ballard, the habit-maker and biographer of learned English women,[2] and with Mrs. Chapone, the mother-in-law of the celebrated Mrs. Hester Chapone, who kept a private boarding-school at Stanton in Gloucestershire. About 1733 that lady raised a small annuity of £20 to enable her protegée to have an assistant, and also wrote on her behalf to Caroline of Anspach; the letter so impressed the Queen that she agreed to allow the impoverished scholar £20 a year, adding that 'as she is so proper to be mistress of a boarding-school for young ladies of a higher rank, I will, instead of an annual allowance, send her £100 now and repeat the same at the end of every five years.[3] Queen Caroline died before the benefaction again fell due, and Mrs. Elstob did not invest the royal gift in the way the donor had suggested; nor would she accept the post of mistress of a Charity School under the patronage of Lady Elizabeth Hastings. With touching humility, when her intellectual attainments are considered, she wrote to Ballard her reasons for refusal:

'There are some things to be taught in such a school which I cannot pretend to; I mean the two accomplishments of a good housewife, spinning and knitting. Not that I would be thought to be above doing any commendable work proper for my sex; for I have continually in my thoughts the glorious character of a virtuous woman, "She seeketh wool and flax and worketh willingly with her hands." And as an instance of the truth of this, the gown I had on when you gave me the favour of a visit was part of it my own spinning and I wear no other stockings but what I knit myself;

[1] Tindal, *History of Evesham*, p. 277.

[2] The original title of his book was 'Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain, who have been celebrated for their Writings or Skill in the Learned Languages, Arts and Sciences (1752)'. It varied in subsequent editions.

[3] Nichols, p. 134.

yet I do not think myself proficient enough in these arts to become a teacher of them. As to your objections on the meanness of the scholars, I assure you, Sir, I should think it as glorious an employment to instruct those poor children as to teach the children of the great Monarch. But I must tell you that mine may be termed a life of disappointments, from my cradle till now, nor do I expect any other while I live.'[1]

Fortune was, however, kinder to her closing years. She obtained the post of governess to the Duke of Portland's children, being engaged to instruct them in the principles of religion and virtue, teach them to read, speak and understand English well, keep them company in the house, and take the air with them when her strength allowed.[2] Rowe More said that he had visited her in her sleeping-room at Bulstrode, 'surrounded with books and dirtiness, the usual appendages of folks of learning'.[3] Mrs. Delany's kindlier pen describes her devotion to the little pupils, scarcely out of babyhood, whom she taught to spell and to learn by heart the 'Turtle and the Sparrow', and, 'Molly Mog of the Rose'.[4] She died in 1756, of grief it is said at the death of one of their number, the Lady Margaret Cavendish Bentinck.[5] Her life story is the best possible comment on the contemporary attitude towards learning, especially in a woman. For her there was little praise and no recognition till she was brought to the verge of hunger; neither willingness to give her genius scope nor insight to appreciate that it deserved another fate than the post of nursery governess in a ducal house. 'If women may be said to have Souls', she had written long before in the Preface already quoted, 'and that their Souls are their better part, and that what is Best deserves our greatest Care for its Improvement; furthermore if good Learning be one of the Soul's greatest Improvements . . . Where is the Fault in Women's seeking after learning? Why are they not to be valu'd for acquiring to themselves the noblest Ornaments?'[6]

[1] Nichols, p. 138.
[2] Delany, vol. ii, p. 14.
[3] Rowe More, *Dissertation on Letter-founders*, p. 28, quoted by Nichols, p. 131.
[4] Delany, vol. ii, p. 131.
[5] Ib., vol. iii, p. 431.
[6] *Homily*, Preface, p. ii.

XVII

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, 1740–62

1. *Introductory*

ALTHOUGH it is clearly inadvisable to attempt elaborate classification in dealing with a subject that is both elusive and intricate, the student of feminine culture in the course of his survey cannot but become aware of atmospheric changes, of outstanding personalities, of dominating influences. From his standpoint the period of the fourth to the sixth decade of the eighteenth century offers just such distinguishing features, while the publication of Rousseau's *Émile* in 1762 introduces a fresh era of attempted reform.

In this case the names outstanding are those of Rollin and of Samuel Richardson; the women occupying the seats of honour are the Blue-Stockings; the atmosphere is heavily charged with sentiment; the tendency of the age is towards moral rather than intellectual enlightenment as far as girls are concerned. The pen of the educationist is wielded meanwhile by an interesting group of letter-writers, whose work was not completed but seen only in its earliest phases during the years under review.

2. *Samuel Richardson and the Cultivation of Sentiment*

Generally speaking the standard of attainment for both sexes, even in the so-called educated classes, was in the mid-eighteenth century at a very low ebb.

'Out of fifteen thousand families of lords and estated gentlemen', wrote Swift as late as 1765, 'one in thirty is tolerably educated'; the daughters of 'great and rich families' are left entirely to their ignorant mothers; or they are sent to boarding-schools or put into the hands

of English or French governesses 'generally the worst that can be gotten for money'.[1]

Wretched travesties of married life appeared on all hands. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, herself no ideal spouse, had declared in 1723 to the Countess of Bute that she was 'very sorry for the forlorn state of matrimony, which is as much ridiculed by our young ladies as it used to be by young fellows. . . . We married women look very silly; we have nothing to excuse ourselves but that it was done a great while ago and we were very young when we did it. *This is the general state of affairs.*'[2]

The daughters of the marriages she contemplated had grown to womanhood when Swift described the shameful, almost universal neglect of good education among 'all born to estates', of whichever sex, which made it of little consequence how they were coupled together.

It was possibly a sense of disquiet at so much ignorant futility which aroused, in place of complete neglect and contempt, some languid interest in the subject of girls' education in relation to home-life. The 'Education of Ladies' was frequently discussed in mixed companies; they debated 'whether it be prudent to choose a wife who hath good natural sense . . . sufficiently versed in her own natural language, able to read and relish history, books of travel, moral or entertaining discourses and be a tolerable judge of the beauties in poetry?' Yet the outcome was not encouraging, for the question was 'generally determined in the negative' by the women themselves, but 'almost universally by the men'. And this conclusion, Swift intimates, was reached despite the fact that 'half the number of well-educated gentry must either remain single or perforce marry women for whom they can possibly have no esteem'.[3]

And yet looking back on a long life Lady Mary, no optimist where her sex was concerned, could, at this time (*c.* 1753), congratulate her granddaughters on their edu-

[1] Swift, *Works*, loc. cit., vol. xi, p. 64.
[2] *Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (1817), vol. iii, p. 145.
[3] See whole passage, Swift, *Works*, vol. xi, p. 61.

cational advantages in an enlightened age as compared with her own. Improvements which come so haltingly cannot indeed be realized except in retrospect.

Into a *milieu* where the moral sense was coarsened, the imagination distorted, and the intellect under-nourished, now stepped out the most remarkable figure of a reformer, armed with a weapon the most potent and the most original that English society perhaps had ever known. The effectiveness of Richardson's novels among women readers of all classes cannot easily be appreciated to-day. Interest in the drama had waned and had never reached more than a certain limited circle of theatre-goers. The growth of prosperity and with it of 'genteel' ambitions among the well-to-do citizens and traders which followed on the Revolution; the tendency to decry homely occupations, even to despise needlework as a waste of time with so much dancing and dressing on hand, gave to many women hours of aimless leisure. Girls of the working class, thanks in part to the charity schools, were now more frequently able to read and had joined the ranks of romance-lovers. The reading public had considerably increased but the supply of light literature was incredibly small. Old-fashioned romances of a certain sort were still in circulation and could be borrowed from small shops in country towns; but as with books of education, so with books of recreation, the moment was ripe for a fresh and more ample supply. And now, to fill with a magnetic warmth and radiance the stolen moment or the blank hours of permitted leisure, there arrived on the scene the heroes and heroines of a new era of romance, an era of which Pamela and Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison were the enchanting forerunners. Women of all ages, the listless lady and her hard-worked damsel alike, began to live anew in the imagined experiences of other men and women: they plunged into 'an unparalleled orgy of vicarious emotion'. One has but to read the outpourings of female correspondents to Clarissa's creator in order to realize the storm of sympathy for her overwhelming sorrows: 'the

book opened', it has been said, 'the flood-gates of human tears; the waters covered the earth. We cannot weep as they used to do in the brave days of old.'[1]

Even those whose critical faculties had not succumbed at the magician's touch were obliged unwillingly to admit his power to charm. The keen-witted Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, for example, despised the pompous bookseller: she supposed him to be some 'parish-curate, whose chief profit depends on weddings and christenings' and as 'ignorant in morality as in anatomy'; she advised that his pen should be confined to the 'amours of housemaids' and insisted that his virtuous young ladies romped 'like wenches round a Maypole'; at the same time she was far too honest to deny his attractiveness. She read him perforce eagerly, 'nay, sobbed over his works in a most scandalous manner'; and gauged by his appeal to her own emotions the effect of his books upon the young and unsophisticated. 'I am persuaded', she writes, 'he is a favourite author in all the nurseries in England, and has done much harm in the boarding-schools, therefore ought to have his absurdities detected.' Her objection to Clarissa, as to high-flown romances in general, was one often before expressed, and never so forcibly as by Fénelon, namely their ill-effect upon the undisciplined mind: 'they place a merit in extravagant passions and encourage the young people to hope for impossible events, to draw them out of misery . . . expecting legacies from unknown relations and generous benefactors to distressed virtue, as much out of nature as fairy treasures.'

Yet Richardson regarded his work in a far different aspect, and had it been indeed merely a touchstone of feeling, its significance for our present inquiry would have been comparatively small. He looked upon himself as a moral reformer moving in an effete society: in his principal characters he attempted to draw ideal examples of manhood and womanhood and aimed (if he did not ultimately arrive) at teaching, in Dr. Johnson's words, 'the passions

[1] A. Birrell, *Res Judicatæ* (1892), p. 18.

to move at the command of virtue'. In Clarissa especially he created a new and appealing type, a young woman who 'triumphs in her own right over the cruelest dishonour', who has a mind so independent and principles so unswerving that she refuses her hand in marriage to the villain who has wronged her. To the reformer's role Richardson superadded that of a chivalrous champion of womanhood. 'You must see', he wrote to Mr. Belfour, 'that the tendency of all I have written is to exalt the sex.'[1] Especially he shared with many of his contemporaries the view that woman's misfortune, the cause of her ineffectiveness and disrepute, was to a great extent her lack of youthful training. Generally speaking he had the reputation of 'desiring women to be learned', a reputation which can be justified alike from his personal correspondence and from his novels. The subject of female learning he discussed at some length with Lady Bradshaigh who, although of sprightly wit, professed to hold the conservative opinion: she hated to hear Latin out of a woman's mouth; she would be ashamed to know more than her husband,[2] and pictured with alarm the moment when mothers should think their daughters talented and say, 'if please God, my girl shall be a scholar' as fathers now said of their boys, whether boobies or not.[3] In short the men did well to keep their wives in ignorance for—the truth will out—they dared not let them try their mettle. To such double-edged sallies from an accomplished woman, Richardson replied ponderously but from an honest heart. If Lady Bradshaigh was indeed not to be brought over to his side it could not be helped, but would she not concede that the woman who, in addition to her natural advantages, had been taught to spell and to read and converse with ease and propriety might be 'as justly feared by half the petty fellows of this age as if she could . . . understand Latin?' He would himself trust the other sex with Latin and even Greek, but, he adds with exemplary caution:

[1] *Correspondence of Samuel Richardson* (ed. A. L. Barbauld, 1804), vol. iv, p. 233.
[2] Ib., vol. vi, p. 52. [3] Ib., p. 70.

'I contend not women should be taught either of these languages; nor do I hold languages to be learning . . . all I contend for is that genius whether in men or women, should take its course, that, as a ray of the divinity, it should not be suppressed. But I acknowledge that the great and indispensable duties of women are of the domestic kind; and that if a woman neglects these or despises them, for the sake of science itself, which I call learning, she is good for nothing.'[1]

Upon which lame conclusion Lady Bradshaigh remarked, 'I think we pretty nearly agree as to learning in women'.[2]

The views which Richardson illustrated, in the person of his heroines, reached a wider and a most attentive audience.

Pamela, it will be remembered, had received an education much above her station; 'My good lady now in heaven', she wrote to her parents, 'loved singing and dancing, and as she would have it I had a voice, she made me learn both; and often and often she has made me sing her an innocent song, and a good psalm too, and dance before her. And I must learn to flower and draw too and to work fine work with my needle. . . . To be sure, I had better, . . . have learned to wash and scour and brew and bake and such-like.' The virtuous serving-maid had even a turn for verse-making, and her copious letters show no traces of illiteracy or of unaccustomed penmanship.

In Harriet Byron, Richardson clearly intended to create an intellectual heroine: one of his characters, Greville, who considered all literary attainment in a woman 'either useless or impertinent', was forced to admit that lovely as was Miss Byron's person her mind was even more to be admired; 'mind and person she is all harmony'. The lady is brought up by her grandfather, 'a man of universal learning', and from the age of seven to fourteen carefully instructed in Italian and French; 'the dead languages he aimed not to teach her, lest he should overload her young mind'.[3] She is also a charming singer; she sings 'Alexander's Feast', arranged by Handel, to her own accompaniment,

[1] *Correspondence*, vol. vi, p. 78.
[2] Ib., p. 96.
[3] *Sir Charles Grandison* (1781), vol. i, p. 9.

while on the same occasion Miss Charlotte Grandison delights the company with a ballad from Shakespeare and one of Scarlatti's pianoforte lessons, 'made to show a fine hand.'[1]

When Lady Mary Wortley Montagu declared that Clarissa Harlowe's upbringing by the learned Mrs. Norton closely resembled her own in being 'one of the worst in the world',[2] she was quite out of harmony with Richardson's intention. Clarissa's friends admired her acquirements, her skill in music, her fine needlework, her deep reading, no less than her moral superiority. Her family, while they deprived her of books and pens and ink, and signified their displeasure by removing from the walls of the home her drawings and the pieces once 'shown to everybody for the magnifying of her dainty finger-works', reproached themselves for their share in her expensive education. Lovelace himself took care to furnish his Clarissa's gilded prison with a Lady's Library. Most significant of all, when Richardson's readers had scarcely dried their tears over the death-bed scene, while they still thrilled with mingled pity and admiration, there awaited perusal a long letter from her bereaved confidant, which invited them to look closer into 'the very pulse of the machine'. The picture of Clarissa's virtues and acquirements presented at this psychological moment was for long regarded, as Richardson had intended it should be, as the embodiment of perfect womanhood and its details were reproduced in more than one fashionable treatise on education. Its author in fact looked backward as much as forward in assembling the various graces of his heroine's character, and some of them were already so old-fashioned as to prove him ill-acquainted with the best society of his day.[3]

Clarissa was a mistress of elocution and read aloud admirably; she had 'no tone, no whine', her emphasis was always admirably placed, and poetry read by her was

[1] Ib., vol. ii, p. 23. [2] *Works*, vol. iv, p. 209.

[3] Miss Howe (p. 331) calls Clarissa's disagreeable sister 'a modern'.

poetry indeed. She wrote a neat, flowing hand, swiftly and evenly; she spelt and punctuated correctly. Like Richardson himself, she loved letter-writing and excelled in 'the graces of the familiar style'; to her correspondence with learned divines she attributed much of her own erudition. She was a good linguist, read Italian and French with ease and had begun to study Latin. Yet it was a cautionary maxim with her as with her creator, 'That a woman who neglects the useful and elegant which distinguish her own sex, for the sake of obtaining the learning which is supposed more peculiar to the other, incurs more contempt by what she forgoes than she gains credit by what she acquires'.[1] Well-read as she was she rarely made any literary reference for fear of being thought affected.[2]

Richardson held particularly definite views about authorship for women. Unlike most of his contemporaries he blamed women of genius for hiding their talents in a napkin; 'they are afraid, lovely dastards', he declared with characteristic effusiveness, 'of showing themselves capable of the perfections they are mistresses of'.[3] He saw no reason why virtue and authorship should be mutually exclusive; 'shall a virtuous and innocent heart', he asks, 'be afraid of leaving its virtues embodied? . . . Shall she refuse to give herself by use a facility in so commendable an employment? . . . Shall she deny herself a style . . . an ability to judge of the style or sense of others or even of what she reads?'[4] He was 'no enemy to the distaff', but thought the pen as pretty an implement as the needle in a woman's fingers.[5]

3. *England and France in Eighteenth-Century Education*

During the opening years of the eighteenth century the fashionable craze for manners, servants, dress, or

[1] Clarissa Harlowe, vol. viii, p. 315. Richardson attributes to Clarissa a conservative attitude, but puts into the mouth of Miss Howe the more advanced views of which he could not wholly disapprove.

[2] Ib., p. 327.

[3] *Correspondence*, vol. ii, p. 81.

[4] Ib., vol. iii, p. 253.

[5] Ib., vol. vi, p. 128.

dancing that were French, or so-called French, supplied the essayists with much piquant material. Addison said indeed that his countrywomen were transported with *anything* that was not English; 'so it be of a foreign growth, let it be Italian, French or High Dutch it is the same thing'.[1] French behaviour as interpreted by the English lady of fashion, was 'fantastical' and loud rather than discreet and virtuous. An affectation of being travelled was necessary to the perfection of manners, and a woman who had never left the parish of St. James's yet betrayed 'as many foreign fopperies in her carriage as she could have gleaned up in half the countries of Europe'.[2] The passion for Italian, especially Italian opera came a good second to the French vogue; a sufficiency of Italian might be acquired by attending divine service in Oxenden Chapel near the Haymarket, and listening to sermons by the reverend author of *A New Method of Teaching the Italian Tongue to Ladies*,[3] but the votary of fashion provided her daughter with a Parisian finish by placing her at a French boarding-school in Bloomsbury or St. Giles's.

During the middle years the relation of the two countries in these matters underwent a change. England began to learn anew of France what to teach young girls that was better worth while than mere froth of accomplishments. There is evidence that French educational treatises were widely used, and as each fresh one appeared it was quickly provided with an English dress.

In 1733 came Humphrey's translation of the *Spectacle de la Nature, or Nature Displayed*, of the Abbé de la Pluche; and soon afterwards the *Lady's Preceptor; a Letter to a Young Lady of Distinction upon Politeness*, was adapted from the French of the Abbé d'Ancourt by a Gentleman of Cambridge.[4]

The *Conseils à une Amie* of Madeleine d'Arsaut, Madame de Puisieux, published in France in 1750, was familiar

[1] *Spectator*, vol. i, No. 18. [2] Ib., vol. i, No. 45.
[3] Ib., vol. iii, No. 238.
[4] The fourth edition (in the British Museum) is dated 1752.

to such English writers as Mrs. Chapone,[1] and a book already a hundred years old, *L'Honneste Femme* of Jacques du Boscq (1633), partially translated under the title of *The Compleat Woman* in 1639 (by N. N.), was dragged from obscurity and translated at its full length, as *The Accomplished Woman*, in 1753. The *Young Misses' Magazine*, a rendering of the most entertaining of Madame le Prince de Beaumont's voluminous lesson-books, was noticed in the *Critical Review* of 1757. Some of these books deserve more than a passing reference; most of them were popular and ran into many editions. All were eclipsed in importance by Rollin's *Méthode*, which appeared in France in 1736–8, and was translated almost at once with the title of *The Method of Teaching and Studying the Belles Lettres*.[2]

La Pluche's *Nature Displayed* consists of a series of Dialogues between the Count and Countess de Jonval, the Prior de Jonval, and the Chevalier de Breuil on aspects of Natural History, insects, birds, fishes, terrestrial animals, and plants. The Countess takes her share in the lively conversation but complains of the loss her sex sustains by a lack of solid knowledge of religion, history, and 'the works of the Deity'. The Count is an exception to the generality of men and has done her signal honour by teaching her to use her eyes and her mind. 'Since his lordship', she declares, 'has led me into a Habit of thinking and employing myself, my Country Seat has seemed to me an earthly Paradise.'[3]

The *Lady's Preceptor*, though it too ran into at least four editions, is an old-fashioned and flippant book, with a limited outlook on 'the Learning proper to a young Lady'. A few lines will suffice to show its character. On the subject of History the author writes:

'I think, Madam, a competent Knowledge in that of your Country

[1] There is no translation noted in the British Museum Catalogue.

[2] The earliest translation in the British Museum is dated 1742; the eleventh edition appeared in 1810.

[3] *Spectacle de la Nature, or Nature Displayed* . . ., translated from the French 1733, vol. ii, Dial. xi, p. 42.

and of a few of her Neighbours . . . is quite sufficient for a young Lady; not that there could be any harm . . . in knowing that Achilles was a Grecian, Pompey a Roman and the celebrated Cleopatra no more than a crafty Gipsy. . . . Philosophy, I think, Madam, is a study without a Lady's Sphere; and you read enough of it to know that the Earth moves round the sun and not the Sun round the earth; . . . that if a Comet appears the World's not therefore at an end; and last that 12 o'clock at Night is not 12 o'clock at Noon, as you Ladies by your way of Life seem at present to think.'[1]

Another Gentleman of Cambridge was responsible for the redaction of Du Boscq, which he considered 'as worthy publication as many productions with which the age superabounds . . . for the entertainment and instruction of the fair sex in virtue and good morals'. The book contained a lively statement of the dangers of romance reading, apposite as when it was penned a century before, while the section on Learned Women was scarcely less advanced in 1753 than it had been in 1633, its year of origin; to say that the sciences are 'too obscure' for women, and the terms of the arts too hard for their understanding, the author held to be a strange mistake, and an extravagant opinion.[2] His schedule of the female scholars of antiquity, Aspasia, Cornelia, Pamphylia, St. Macrina, and St. Bridget, was completed by the eighteenth-century translator in a cautious foot-note, adding to their number the 'Dutchess of S., Mrs. C., Mrs. N., Lady W. M., Lady I., and Miss L., and others that excel in ethics, philosophy, divinity, and poetry'.[3] It is remarkable that a retranslation of so old a book should have been considered worth while, unless the subject it dealt with was much in people's minds.

Madame le Prince de Beaumont (d. 1780), a native of Rouen, a refugee, and for many years a governess in private families, published her *Magasin des Enfants*, as well as the translation called *The Young Misses' Magazine*, in

[1] *The Lady's Preceptor . . . taken from the French of the Abbé d'Ancourt . . . by a Gentleman of Cambridge* (4th edit., 1752), p. 63.

[2] *The Accomplish'd Woman, written in French by M. du Boscq . . ., translated by a Gentleman of Cambridge*, 1753, vol. i, p. 118. [3] Ib., pp. 121, 122.

London. The French version, composed for her English pupils, was dedicated to Paul Petrovich, grandson of Peter the Great and nephew of the Empress Elizabeth. The preface explains that the authoress at first tried the manuscript upon grown-up people, who could not lay it down, then on her scholars of all ages. She had a strong belief in removing obstacles from the path of learning, and from her remarks it would seem that a far lower standard was attained by English girls in her day than French masters had required of their pupils a century earlier: 'une fille de quinze ans, qui commence à apprendre le François, à besoin d'un stile aussi simple qu'une autre de cinq ans qui lit dans sa langue naturelle. Qu'on juge par-là de l'ennuie que doivent donner aux pauvres enfants la lecture et la traduction de Télémaque et de Gil Blas.'[1] The substitute for these masterpieces offered by Mme de Beaumont illustrates the fragmentary superficiality still doing duty for education. Her book contains a series of dialogues between Mrs. Affable, the Governess, and several young girls, Lady Sensible and Lady Witty (aged twelve), Lady Mary (five), Lady Charlotte (seven), Lady Trifle (ten), and Lady Tempest (thirteen), who are modelled on the characters in Sarah Fielding's *Governess*.[2] Each dialogue is followed by a fairy-tale, a bible story, and a geography lesson, interspersed with scraps of mythology, historical anecdotes, and moral maxims. There are many amusing sidelights on contemporary manners, such as the description of the priggish Lady Witty's début into fashionable circles. Lady Trifle, who loves 'pretty things from Paris

[1] *Magasin des Enfants par Madame le Prince de Beaumont*, Introduction, p. ii.

[2] *'The Young Misses' Magazine*, containing Dialogues between A Governess and several Young Ladies of Quality her Scholars in which Each Lady is made to speak according to her particular Genius, Temper and Inclination; Their several Faults are pointed out and the easy Way to mend them, as well as to think and speak and act properly; no less care being taken to form their Hearts to Goodness than to enlighten their Understandings with Useful Knowledge.' 'A short and clear Abridgement is also given of Sacred and Profane History and some Lessons in Geography. The Useful is blended throughout with the Agreeable, the Whole being interspersed with proper Reflections and Moral Tales by Madame le Prince de Beaumont'. Second edition, 1767.

better than geography lessons at two guineas a month', asks her friend: 'Pray tell me, my dear, what is so much good sense good for?'

Lady Witty replies, 'Good for! a thousand things; last year I was quite weary at papa's assembly, I was treated just like a little baby: but now the company talk to me and I talk, and they tell me I am as witty as an angel'.

To reward her pupils' goodness of heart, Mrs. Affable gives a geography lesson: ''Tis for that purpose', she explains, 'I have sent for a dish filled with water. You see this dish, ladies: suppose the water to be the sea, these pieces of pasteboard, which I am going to put in, shall be the earth; all the pieces entirely surrounded with water we will call islands, and that which joins to the dish by a little bit and is half an island shall be a peninsula,'[1] &c.

The *Éducation Complète* of the same author, written for the family of Frederick, Prince of Wales, appeared in 1753, and was a forerunner of the famous *Mangnall's Questions*.[2] Each lesson consisted of question and answer, forming that kind of compendium of dates and facts which captivated the fancy of many generations of school teachers.

Rollin's *Method of Teaching and Studying the Belles Lettres*, an epoch-making book, stands upon a different level to these facile but very popular inanities. Its inspiration was drawn from great masters, from Quintilian and Seneca among ancient writers, and Fénelon and Locke among the moderns. By its means some attempt was made to bring English girls under the guidance of those classic principles which from time immemorial had shaped the education of boys. Yet its effect was in many respects as disastrous as it was prolonged and far-reaching. The writer's laudable intention was to form the mind by the study of the liberal arts and sciences; to improve the

[1] Ib., p. 130.

[2] *Éducation Complète ou Abregé de l'Histoire Universelle, melée de Géographie, de Chronologie, à l'usage de La Famille Royale de S. A. R. la Princesse de Galles*, par Madame Le Prince de Beaumont, 1753.

manners and conduct; to cultivate and inform the religious sense.

Rollin counted of the first importance a thorough knowledge of the mother tongue in all its delicacies of usage. The cultivation of taste and judgement depended greatly on a persevering study of the best authors, particularly of the poets. But before all else he placed the study of history, 'the first master to be given to children, equally serviceable to entertain and instruct them, to form their hearts and understandings and to enrich their memories with abundance of facts as agreeable as useful'. Next in importance to historical studies Rollin considered the 'Natural Philosophy of Children', by which he intended 'a study of nature which scarce requires anything besides the eye . . . and consists in attending to the objects with which nature presents us, in considering them with care and admiring their different beauties but without searching out their secret causes, which properly belong to the physicks of the learned'.

The influence of Rollin's book represents one more tragedy in the history of women's education. His system appeared to shadow out a way of escape from those vanities which were becoming an oppression even to their votaries, and to offer something better than a girl and her teacher had known for several generations. Unfortunately the features which were seized on, stereotyped and exaggerated, no doubt far beyond the author's intention, became a fresh set of shackles upon the spirit of liberty. Women's learning, while apparently gaining in extent from the following of a new prophet, gained nothing in depth or in thoroughness. The faults which distinguish it for the next hundred years' are those which if not patent in Rollin's theory are at least too easily to be deduced from it. Rollin in commending the study of literature and poetry commended also the use of books of extracts in daily lections; he was taken all too literally at his word. He regarded history as a compendium of valuable information to be acquired by rote, as an unlimited

store of conversational pilules; the reign of *memoria technica*, and the tyranny of dry fact was at once inaugurated. He laid great emphasis upon the moral values of all learning, and his disciples religiously 'improved' every occasion into an opportunity for instruction: 'a garden, a country, a palace are all so many books which lie open to [children] but they must have been taught and accustomed to read them'. This principle was carried to the limits of absurdity in the *Adèle et Théodore* of Mme de Genlis, which, a few years later, in its turn greatly influenced girls' education in England. Beyond all this, Rollin's *Méthode* inculcated an extensive rather than an intensive type of education; the thoroughness of the scholar was supposed to have great perils for the average mind; in a little trifling knowledge of a variety of subjects lay the way of safety; in a superficiality which proved disastrous to women-learners at this stage.

It is significant that Rollin considered Locke, who placed the emphasis differently, incapable of appreciating the educational significance of classic literature. 'I question', he says, 'whether he was well skilled in the Greek Tongue and in the study of the Belles Lettres; at least he seems not to set the value upon them they deserve.' In the same way, his teaching of the 'Natural Philosophy of Children' is not to be regarded as the first step towards more advanced work (as Bacon's view had undoubtedly been), but as sufficient in itself, an aesthetic training which 'scarce requires anything besides the eye'.

Rollin did not indeed overlook the importance of character-building, the necessity for studying a pupil's idiosyncracy in order to manage him with success; but he gave the first place to acquirements: 'the end of masters is to habituate their scholars to serious application of mind, to make them love and value the sciences, and to cultivate in them such a taste as shall make them thirst after them when they are gone from school'. The faults which needed correction were, in his view, chiefly those which, like indolence and sloth, render 'all the good qualities of the

mind useless'. Yet the type of individual he envisaged as a happy product of his system was rather social than highly intellectual, dilettante rather than scholarly; 'these studies', he remarks, 'make a child observant, teach him a thousand curious points relating to sciences, arts, and professions, give him a taste for gardening, planting, for the country and walking, by no means a matter of indifference; enable him to make an agreeable figure in conversation, and not to be under a necessity either of holding his tongue or talking of trifles'.

4. *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* (1740–1806)

At intervals, over a period of at least sixty years, an interesting group of writers contributed to didactic literature many volumes of *Letters* concerned with moral and educational questions. They are most conveniently considered together, and at this point, for while our earliest instance has affinities with the age of Queen Anne, the majority belong to the reign of George III; all have a common framework, and with slight variations follow out a stereotyped programme.

The choice of the epistolary form was no doubt due to the example of yet earlier or more original writers, to Sir Thomas FitzOsborne, and Swift, above all to Madame de Sévigné. The little calf-bound volumes, now for the most part to be read only in old-fashioned libraries or on second-hand bookstalls, were in their day highly influential, and through many decades constantly reprinted; they contain, in the attractive shape of familiar letters, sometimes interspersed with exemplary stories, good advice on the conduct of life quite literally from the cradle to the grave. A large number are addressed to the sex most in want of moral support: sometimes the correspondent is a real person, like Mrs. Chapone's favourite niece or Lady Pennington's daughter; sometimes a creature of the imagination. The author of an early example, the Reverend Mr. Wetenhall Wilkes—when his book entitled *A Letter of Genteel and Moral Advice to a Young Lady*,

FOR

A

YOUNG LADY,

ON HER

ENTRANCE into the WORLD;

ADDRESSED TO

A FAVOURITE NIECE.

A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE,

AT THE

Minerva-Press,

LEADENHALL-STREET.

M, DCC, XCIV.

XIII. Frontispiece and Title-page of an eighteenth-century Work on Female Education

'A large number of Letters on the Improvement of the Mind are addressed to the sex most in want of moral support; sometimes the correspondent is a real person, sometimes a creature of the imagination', p. 408

being a System of Rules and Informations to qualify the Fair Sex to be useful and happy in every scene of Life, first published in 1740, ran, twenty years later, into a fourth edition, discussed in a new Preface the identity of his correspondent:

'I find', he says, 'it has been a Subject of great Doubt and Enquiry whether there is or has been a Niece of mine to whom this Letter was originally written; or whether it were a fictitious character? The Resolution of this Query can be of no real Service to the Public: However to gratify the Curiosity of those who may desire to know it, I take the Liberty to affirm that there was such a Person; and that I have substantial Grounds for hoping she still lives. This is a known Truth.'[1]

The Reverend John Bennett, whose *Letters to a Young Lady* were dedicated to Queen Charlotte, wrote for the benefit of an old friend's daughter:

'I shall really think myself complimented by your correspondence', he tells 'Miss Lucy', 'if you will call me father or brother you will give an unusual lustre to my name . . . if you will occasionally visit my little cot . . . the roses of my humble garden shall, if possible, be doubly sweet.' . . .[2]

Wetenhall Wilkes is a disciple of William Law; his inspiration is drawn from the *Serious Call* as well as from the Bible, the *Spectator*, and classic writers such as Plato, Seneca, Cicero, Epictetus, and Plutarch. The tone of his letters for the most part is very serious, although enlivened by humorous touches and apt illustration. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he recommended Female Learning 'on all occasions',

'If it were but universally considered', he wrote, 'that Women . . . have as much Reason to aspire to the highest Virtues and Accomplishments as the wisest and gravest Philosophers—how many Blessings and Ornaments might we expect from the Fair Sex, who are formed by their natural Tempers to Goodness and Tenderness and so adapted, by the Brightness and Clearness of their Minds,

[1] Wetenhall Wilkes, *A Letter of Genteel and Moral Advice* (7th edition, 1760), Preface.

[2] John Bennett, *Letters to a Young Lady on a variety of useful and interesting subjects* (1789), vol. i, p. 3.

to admire and imitate everything that is polite, virtuous and divine.'[1]

Wilkes looked back with approbation to the generation gone by—to the ladies who studied herbs and mixed plant-essences into healing draughts for the poor, while others were 'spinning out their heavy Hours in shuffling or dividing a Pack of Cards'. He deferred to an even more distant past when he discussed deportment, and urged the avoidance of 'particular Motions' with the head, oblique glances of the eyes, ogling, winking, 'dimpling the Cheeks or primming of the Lips'. He approved the attitude of Elizabethan writers towards lack of self-control, especially in times of bereavement; 'to sink under inordinate grief . . . belongs to a vulgar Mind . . . to bless God in the Time of Trouble . . . is the true Exercise of a reasonably well-informed Soul'.[2] No less was he averse to 'Sensibilities', and would have his niece keep clear of creating a panic when the wind rustled, or a spider crawled past, 'all which such like Whims would make your Life as full of Alarms as that of a Hare'.[3]

The book which next claims attention, entitled *An Unfortunate Mother's Advice to her Absent Daughters, in a Letter to Miss Pennington*, 1761, and successful enough to have reached a fifth edition in 1770, takes the reader into an entirely different atmosphere. In the interval since Mr. Wilkes's admonitions had brought with them a breath of sincere piety, an insistence on old-fashioned virtues, on reticence and self-mastery, the novels of Samuel Richardson had revolutionized the social outlook. Lady Pennington's sense of propriety was of abnormal delicacy. Her marriage was a failure; she was separated from her daughters; yet at the earliest possible moment in her book she calls heaven to witness that her husband was, as she says in defiance of grammar, 'the first man who I ever made any private assignation with, or even met in a room alone—nor did I take that liberty with him till the most solemn mutual engagement, the matrimonial

[1] Wilkes, pp. 5 and 6. [2] Ib., p. 113. [3] Ib., p. 188.

ceremony had bound us to each other'.[1] She is thus, self-confessed, an authority on the proprieties, on the sense of fitness which must restrain female learning within bounds, on the ordering of an elegant table with economy, the management of a family with prudence, the ethics of settling bills or paying 'commissions' through steward or housekeeper ('an obsolete practice though itself very laudable'), on visits of ceremony, and rules of dress. She neglects neither religion nor morals, neither the duty of reading, nor the recommendation of good books, but her main contribution to educational literature is the curriculum of an infallible etiquette.

The most celebrated of our series, the *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, addressed to a young Lady*, by Mrs. Chapone, appeared in 1773. They were written to a young niece who held a daughter's place in her affections, and were only given to the public at the insistent request of Mrs. Montagu. To that great lady they were dedicated, and 'some strokes from her elegant pen' imparted a crowning touch of distinction to their pleasant style. Hester Chapone was born in 1727, the daughter of Thomas Mulso, of Twywell in Northamptonshire. An *Ode to Peace* which she addressed to Mrs. Carter on the publication of *Epictetus* embodied her girlish admiration for female scholarship; later she published in *The Adventurer* the 'Story of Fidelia', and as Lady Racket, whom Johnson advised to light up her apartments with myrtle, she contributed to *The Rambler*, in 1750, the four 'billets' (No. 10) which opened the attack on card-playing, afterwards successfully prosecuted by the Bas-Bleu. She was, as Mr. Gosse has said, with Mrs. Carter and Catherine Talbot, 'a dear and life-long friend of Johnson and an apt disciple of his moral manner'. In 1760 began her brief married life of ten months with Mr. Chapone, a London attorney, and a son of Sarah Kirkham, the kind benefactor of Elizabeth Elstob. The enduring charm of

[1] *An Unfortunate Mother's Advice to her Absent Daughters in a Letter to Miss Pennington* 5th edit. 1770, p. 9.

Mrs. Chapone's *Letters* is in the writer's warm and affectionate nature, in the artless enthusiasm for poetry and great thoughts, which she longs to communicate to her pupil's mind; in her good sense, shrewdness, and transparent sincerity; above all in her deep and unaffected piety.

A series of *Letters to a Young Lady on a variety of useful and interesting subjects, calculated to improve the heart, to form the manners and enlighten the understanding*, by the Rev. John Bennett, first published in 1789, with the motto 'That our Daughters may be as polished Corners of the Temple', show the influence of Rousseau even more strongly than Lady Pennington's *Advice* display that of Clarissa, and from this point of view are elsewhere discussed. Mr. Bennett made use of imaginary portraits to display characteristics he admired or deplored, a practice followed by other letter-writers and borrowed from periodic literature. Bennett's Louisa and his Lady Harriett are matched by the array of heroines who serve as warning or exemplar in *Letters on the Intellectual and Moral Character of Women*, addressed by W. Duff to the Ladies of Great Britain, and published only in 1807, although actually written twenty years earlier. Duff carried to excess the habit of using fiction to cloak moral disquisitions, which the poet Rogers regarded as a peculiar weakness of women-writers.

The Polite Lady, or a course of Female Education in a Series of Letters from a Mother to her Daughter, appeared a few years earlier than the foregoing, and by 1785 had reached a fourth edition. This book was, with the greatest deference and respect, inscribed to the Governesses of Ladies' Boarding-Schools in Great Britain and Ireland, and consisted of a correspondence between Portia, a fond parent, and her daughter Sophia, a pupil in Mrs. Bromley's boarding-school. Mrs. Bromley was a gentlewoman of approved ability and good sense, and Portia attempted to digest into a regular method the instruction she wished her to impart to Sophia, since it was a mother's

duty to insist on the acquisition of suitable accomplishments and the correction of particular foibles.

The production of improving letters of this type went on into the new century. In 1806 Mrs. West, who had already earned favourable notice by her *Letters to a Young Man*, produced (once more under the aegis of Queen Charlotte) three companion volumes of *Letters to a Young Lady, in which the duties and character of women are considered, chiefly with a reference to prevailing opinion.* They are addressed to 'Miss M–', the orphan daughter of a well-loved friend, and owe much to the *Strictures* of Hannah More. Of greater value educationally are the *Letters for Literary Ladies* of Miss Edgeworth, which represent a correspondence between a gentleman who has newly acquired an infant daughter and his friend who holds advanced opinions on female learning.

5. *The Contribution of the Blue-Stockings to Women's Education*

Our period brings into view a new and interesting type of 'paragon'. If those we have called the 'serious' women, by their intelligent outlook, their religious studies, and their taste for philosophical discussion, kept alive in a world of frivolous pursuits the idea that their sex could be interested in something besides 'dress and the tables', their immediate successors performed no less efficiently a task of different character. They set themselves to reform 'Society', that is social intercourse between men and women, especially those of good understanding. Incidentally they acquired for women a more estimable position than they had enjoyed for at least a century past. The service of the Blue-Stockings to English womanhood was primarily social rather than educational; intellectual activity they valued chiefly for its effect in enhancing social enjoyment, by affording more varied and worthier subjects of conversation than natural wit unaided could produce. In this respect the group resembled the ladies of the French Salons a century earlier. At the same time, the

leaders of the 'movement', if it can be allowed so ambitious a title, were women of undoubted ability, lovers of good literature, and in some cases possessed of ready pens. One of their number at least achieved considerable scholarship, while Mrs. Montagu, the originator, with Mrs. Vesey, of the famous coterie, took an enlightened interest in the question of girls' upbringing and the reform of girls' boarding-schools.

No one in her generation did more to raise public opinion of the intellectual capacity of women than Elizabeth Carter. She was the daughter of a Kentish rector, whose erudition had been recognized by the bestowal of a Six-Preachership in Canterbury Cathedral. Dr. Carter gave all his large family, both sons and daughters, a learned education. Margaret Carter, Elizabeth's younger sister, was accomplished in Latin and French and had studied Greek, Italian, and Hebrew. Elizabeth herself from girlhood had the ambition to be a scholar, but she was so slow at her books it seemed unlikely of fulfilment. Her success was a triumph of perseverance, at the expense of her health, which she permanently impaired by the use of green snuff, by chewing green tea, binding her head with wet towels, putting wet cloths to the pit of her stomach and other forms of martyrdom to keep herself awake over her books in the night-hours.

Apart from home-training, she boarded for a year at Canterbury with M. Le Suer, a refugee minister, to learn fluent French; she studied music also with characteristic industry, though she had no taste for accomplishments.[1] Her indefatigable industry, her long days of study from four or five in the morning till late at night, brought their speedy reward in the shape of a reputation for learning.

Dr. Johnson pronounced an encomium on her classical

[1] *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter*, by [her nephew] Montagu Pennington (1816), vol. i, p. 10 et seq. A quantity of MS. music for spinet and German flute in her handwriting is, or was, long preserved.

knowledge, remarking of some celebrated scholar that he understood Greek better than any one he had ever known except Elizabeth Carter. She was equally conversant with Latin—but had never learnt either Greek or Latin grammar; she read Hebrew daily, spoke French, Italian, Spanish, and German (the last with some idea of qualifying herself for a place about the Princess of Wales), and later in life embarked upon Portuguese and Arabic.[1] Not content with linguistic triumphs, she studied mathematics, as an aid to astronomy, and left behind her quantities of problems, diagrams, and projections, 'very neat and accurate'.

A lady so accomplished and so indefatigable a student gravitated naturally to literary circles, and from the age of eighteen Mrs. Carter spent every winter in Bas Bleu society. In 1738 she produced a small collection of poems, with the motto in Greek, 'These things are nothing'.[2] Her next literary venture was a translation from the French of Crousas' Critique of Pope's *Essay on Man*; another from the Italian, Algarotti's *Newtonianismo per le Dame*, was published under the title of *Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy explained for the use of the Ladies in six Dialogues on Light and Colour*; this Dr. Johnson probably corrected for the Press, while contemporary biographers described the translator as 'justly to be ranked with the Sulpicias of the ancients and the Schurmans and Daciers of the moderns'.[3] The fame of her learning gave rise to wild rumours of ungovernable ambition. 'Here's all Deal is in amazement', wrote her sister, 'that you want to be a Member of the Parliament House. . . . Let me know in your next whether 'tis a jest or that you really want to go.'[4]

In point of fact Mrs. Carter, as she was now respectfully called in deference to her high reputation, was a modest

[1] Ib., p. 13. Happily she was spared Fanny Burney's fate by a greater independence of mind: 'What', she said, 'is going to Court but setting one's cap handsomely at the expense of losing one's head.' Ib., p. 183.

[2] Ib., p. 11.

[3] Ib., p. 46.

[4] Ib., p. 48.

and retiring woman, although she took pleasure in congenial society.[1] Her own conversation was not witty but always of interest; if she had not Mrs. Montagu's 'elegant vivacity' she was never stupid or prosy. Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Vesey, the leading 'Bas-bleu', were her life-long friends, and the latter could make her no better bequest than the 'inestimable treasure' of her own letters, 'wishing much you would give them for the improvement of future minds'.[2] It was however by a more solid production that Elizabeth Carter was to win a scholar's fame. In 1749, at the desire of her accomplished friend, Miss Talbot, enforced by Dr. Thomas Secker, at that time Bishop of Oxford, she began a translation of Epictetus. Characteristically, its completion was delayed by her preoccupation with a pupil, her youngest brother, who went to Benet College, Cambridge, in 1756. Her work was not intended for publication, but 'sent up in sheets as fast as finished to receive the Bishop's corrections'.[3] Secker was inclined to consider the style too ornate. 'Unless you can prove to him that Epictetus wore a laced coat', wrote the sprightly Miss Talbot, 'he will not allow you to dress him in one.'[4] Mrs. Carter herself decidedly preferred a paraphrastic translation. 'With regard to style', she held, 'one certainly ought not to introduce tropes and figures which the author himself never dreamed on; but if the sense is preserved is it not lawful . . . to make him speak such a language as will make him appear natural and easy to those with whom he is taught to converse.' The Bishop, however, insisted that a translator should preserve his author's 'genuine air and character', and Mrs. Carter industriously improved herself in 'strength and shortness of expression'.[5]

[1] *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter*, by [her nephew] Montagu Pennington (1816), p. 152.

[2] Ib., p. 155.

[3] Ib., p. 157.

[4] Ib., p. 160.

[5] Ib., p. 166. Cf. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's ideas; in translating, at the age of twenty, the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus she 'endeavoured at no beauty of style but to keep literally' to the sense of the author. *Works*, vol. i, p. 182.

Through all stages of the work Secker acted as an inflexible critic, never allowing the authoress to do less than justice to her powers. 'Do dear Madam Carter', he wrote delightfully about some proofs insufficiently corrected, 'get yourself whipt, get yourself *whipt*. Indeed, it is quite necessary for you. I know you mean to be careful, but you cannot without this help. . . . Here are some sheets come down . . . and the first thing I have cast my eyes upon is Epictetus for Epicurus. . . . One needs go no farther to see what prescription your case indicates.'[1]

A first edition, numbering 1,018 copies, with a poem by Mrs. Chapone prefixed,[2] was printed, by guinea subscription, in April 1758; in the following July a further 250 copies were called for.[3] 'The extraordinary circumstances of a translation from the Greek of so difficult an author by a woman, made a great noise all over Europe', says Mrs. Carter's biographer. Lord Lyttleton wrote in admiration to Mrs. Montagu, that 'the English ladies will appear as much superior to the French in wit and learning as the men in arms'; a highly laudatory review was published in a Russian journal, *Sotschinenie*, of May 1750,[4] and the Czarina read the book quite through with high approbation.[5] The authoress took a sprightly pleasure in her triumphs; it was indeed something of a compliment when people asserted that not she but her father or Bishop Secker had actually written the book.[6] The publication in 1762 of a further volume of verse added nothing to her fame; she had no poetic gift and never wrote a line without considering whether it could possibly do mischief.[7]

Her work ended with the establishment of a solid claim to scholarly achievement, at a moment when this was of

[1] *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter*, by [her nephew] Montagu Pennington (1816), p. 286.
[2] Ib., p. 213.
[3] Ib., p. 207.
[4] Ib., Appendix, vol. ii, p. 417.
[5] Ib., vol. i, p. 234.
[6] Ib., p. 212.
[7] Ib., p. 234.

real service to the educational advancement of women: that achievement was marred by no eccentricity nor foolish self-conceit; its possessor might be that detested being a female virtuoso, but no less was she a modest and religious woman, and withal loyal to the government and partial to the house of Hanover; a woman who esteemed the three first Georges 'the best monarchs that ever sat in succession on the throne of England',[1] and delighted, in her old age, to discuss German Literature with Queen Charlotte at Lord Cremorne's house in Chelsea.[2]

Mrs. Montagu's contribution to female accomplishment was, in its way, no less considerable than Mrs. Carter's, although in the field not of classical but of English literature. 'Though the education of women is always too frivolous', she wrote of her own upbringing, 'I am glad mine had such a qualification of the serious as to fit me for the relish of the belles bagatelles.'[3] Yet the reading which she pursued untiringly, with great exactness and much critical acumen, is scarcely to be described as 'lovely trifling'; she was devoted to the classics, in translation, as indeed were most of her book-loving contemporaries: Sophocles was 'dear to her almost as Shakespeare himself';[4] when dressed for a ball she sat down to read through the *Ajax* and the *Philoctetes* and wrote a long critical letter on the two dramas.[5] She was author of three of the *Dialogues of the Dead*, published under the name of Lord Lyttelton; these are the 'Cadmus and Mercury', 'Mercury and a Modern Fine Lady', and 'Plutarch, Charon, and a Modern Bookseller';[6] her most important composition was, however, the *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare* (1769), which she intended as a reply to Voltaire's attack upon the dramatist. Where her feelings were aroused Elizabeth Montagu was not easily outmatched in a contest of wit. To Voltaire's

[1] *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter*, by [her nephew] Montagu Pennington (1816), p. 445. [2] Ib., p. 473.
[3] Dr. Doran, *A Lady of the Last Century* (1873), p. 57.
[4] Ib., p. 68. [5] Ib., p. 72. [6] Ib., p. 74.

boast: 'C'est moi qui le premier montrai aux Français quelques perles que j'avais trouvé dans son fumier,' she replied without hesitation, 'C'est un fumier qui a fertilisé une terre bien ingrate.'[1] Her defence ran into six editions before 1810 and took its place among the classics. Johnson denounced the celebrated essay—but without reading it: Cowper having studied its contents wondered no longer that Mrs. Montagu stood 'at the head of all that is called learned'.[2] A woman so versatile, endowed with beauty and social charm, and it may be added, a substantial fortune, was not unlikely to prefer the study of human nature even to that of books. 'I am a Vertuoso', she wrote of herself, 'in what relates to human character.'[3] Education clearly fell within the circle of her interests, and it was especially commended by her anxiety about the upbringing of a favourite niece. Many of her comments will be found included in the chapter on boarding-schools; she held no brief for an educational system which satisfied most of her contemporaries, but disliked the fashion of 'breeding girls as early as possible to the love of extravagance',[4] no less than the lack of simplicity, the 'missy pertnesses, airs and minauderies' which put many girls of fashion upon a line with milliners' apprentices.[5]

Mercury, in her Dialogue already spoken of, sneers at the young ladies who gain their ideas of religion, sentiment, and manners from 'a dancing-master, a music-master, and a chambermaid', while, in the same vein, her Modern Lady boasts that she has spared no expense in educating her daughters; they have 'a dancing-master, a music-master, and a drawing-master, and a French governess to teach them behaviour and the French language'.[6] In old age (1799) after reading Hannah More's *Strictures on Female Education*, Mrs. Montagu wrote her approval to the authoress:

'You have most judiciously pointed out the errors of modern edu-

[1] Ib., p. 150. [2] Ib., p. 156. [3] Ib., p. 212.
[4] Ib., p. 235. [5] Ib., p. 189. [6] Ib., p. 74.

cation which seems calculated entirely to qualify young women for whatever their godfathers and godmothers had renounced for them at their baptism; and what is most shocking is that a virtuous matron and tender mother values herself much on not having omitted anything that can fit her daughter for the world, the flesh and the devil. . . .'[1]

Comparatively little is known of the personal history of Mrs. Elizabeth Vesey (1715–91), who is chiefly familiar through the impression she made on her contemporaries —on Walpole, Dr. Johnson, and Sterne—as the perfect hostess, possessing 'the magic art of putting all her company at their ease without the least appearance of design'. The charming figure of the 'Sylph' flits in and out of letters of the period, always welcome, always gracious and self-forgetful. The catalogue of her library at Lucan House, recently published, shows her to have been a book-lover no less than a woman of considerable mental powers. There, beside first editions of contemporary poets, historians and biographers—Addison, Sterne, Goldsmith, Burke, Adam Smith, and the rest—are to be found fine volumes of the older writers, Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton, Tasso and Molière, Anacreon, the Latin poets, Cicero in translation; above all there are presentation copies of their works given to a beloved friend by Mrs. Carter, Mrs. Montagu, and Hannah More.[2]

To the same coterie belonged another delightful and cultivated woman, to be known intimately from her copious letters and diaries, Mary Granville, who became by successive marriages Mrs. Pendarves, and Mrs. Delany, wife of Patrick Delany, Dean of Down. She had 'genius in her fingers' and was constantly inventing artistic trifles in various media; but her intellect was active and observant: she despised the fashionable education of young ladies, its vanity and expensiveness.

'Nothing is attended to but embellishing the person', she wrote to Samuel Richardson in 1751, 'whilst the mind is uncultivated,

[1] Dr. Doran, *A Lady of the Last Century* (1873), p. 353.

[2] Book Catalogue 14, *The Library of Mrs. Elizabeth Vesey*, by W. H. Robinson, Newcastle (1926).

turned to no useful study. No provision laid in for the accidents of life, they live a cypher in their father's house; the various scenes and changes of life not at all considered; ignorant of every duty: only taught to look as handsome as they can and to be as fashionable in their phrases and gestures as in their caps and hoop-petticoats. It is vexatious to have creatures endued with reason act so irrationally. . . . I am not for neglecting the graces of the person but they should be only as a fair binding to a fine book, which often may tempt people to examine what otherwise might be overlooked. . . .'[1]

If Mrs. Montagu had a foible it was the satisfaction of holding undivided sway over a circle of admirers. She had, however, one rival, a woman already drawing near to a painful death, whose erratic genius for more than fifty years had extorted from society a half-unwilling tribute of admiration. One suspects more than a touch of envy in the description Elizabeth Montagu wrote of her husband's eccentric kinswoman, the Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, 'one who neither thinks, speaks, acts, or dresses, like anybody else', a mistress whose staff is made up of all nations, and in whose drawing-room you imagine yourself to be in the first story of the Tower of Babel.[2] It was by her cosmopolitan tastes that Lady Mary best served the intellectual advancement of her sex. Fate made of her a traveller, a role then almost unimagined, which one of her fearless outlook was well qualified to fill. She had the capacity not only to appreciate contact with the East and with the arts of Greece and Rome but to pass on her impressions in vivid descriptions, and to arouse in home-bred women a sense of the great world.

An increased zest for continental travel for the sake of travel, not merely under pressure of circumstance, must be reckoned among the cultural forces of this time. Mrs. Carter herself went abroad to Holland and France in 1763 in the distinguished company of Mrs. Montagu and Lord Bath, and talked Latin with the priest who showed the party over Cologne Cathedral.[3] Mrs. Montagu

[1] *Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*, ed. A. L. Barbauld, (1804), vol. iv, p. 41.
[2] Doran, loc. cit., p. 129.
[3] Pennington, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 328.

journeyed about her native country and wrote to her friends glowing descriptions of Highland scenery, while she relished no less keenly the homage of Paris savants. But she was incapable of Lady Mary's imaginative insight; she had not the poetic sympathy which brought the elder woman delight in the unchanging atmosphere of classic story.

'I can assure you', she wrote from Greece to Pope, before their estrangement, 'the princesses and great ladies pass their time at their looms embroidering veils and robes, surrounded by their maids . . . in the same manner as we find Andromache and Helen described. . . . The snowy veil that Helen throws over her face is still fashionable; and I never see half a dozen of old bashaws . . . with their reverent beards sitting basking in the sun, but I recollect good King Priam and his counsellors.'[1]

Nothing, she feels assured, could have been more agreeable than a journey like hers, two or three thousand years since, when, after drinking a dish of tea with Sappho, she might, the same evening, have visited the Temple of Homer in Chios.[2] After a few months only in a strange land she is 'pretty far gone in Oriental learning',[3] and studies so persistently she half forgets her mother-tongue.[4] The antiquarian fever possesses her, and she indulges the hobby of amassing bric-à-brac which Lucy Countess of Bedford and Queen Mary II had made fashionable years before. She collects Greek medals and bespeaks a mummy;[5] she copies Latin inscriptions from broken pedestals and feels a passing regret for the marble tombs and great blocks of granite 'daily lessened by the prodigious balls the Turks make from them for their cannon'.[6] Her letters reflect the keen intellectual stimulus of travel; it is a fresh note and indicates, as Mary Astell appreciated, the growth of a new consciousness among Englishwomen.[7] The old querulous tone, the sense of limitation and of struggle disappears; there is an intelligent outlook and

[1] *Works*, vol. ii, p. 266.
[2] Ib., vol. iii, p. 41.
[3] Ib., vol. ii, p. 215.
[4] Ib., vol. ii, p. 321.
[5] Ib., vol. ii, p. 269.
[6] Ib. vol. iii, p. 36.
[7] *Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (1773), Preface, p. viii.

a freedom of expression which justify the writer's assertion that forty years hence her letters would be fully as entertaining as those of Madame de Sévigné.

While the majority of Bas Bleu ladies were devoted to intellectual society, one of their number, Sarah Robinson, afterwards Mrs. Scott, the younger and less fortunate sister of Mrs. Montagu, was attracted by a more austere view of life. Her book, *Millenium* (*sic*) *Hall* (1762), is an after-echo of Mary Astell's *Serious Proposal.* It purports to be written by an anonymous Gentleman on his Travels, and describes a community of ladies dwelling together in a country-house who spend their lives in works of philanthropy and of education. The foundresses, Mrs. Mancel and Mrs. Morgan, life-long friends, portray Mrs. Scott herself and her boon companion Lady Barbara Montagu; a letter of Mrs. Montagu's describes the daily life of the two ladies at Batheaston, where they lived together for many years, in terms easily recognizable in the novel itself.[1] *Millenium Hall* had its origin in the compassion which Mrs. Mancel and Mrs. Morgan felt for 'the most unhappy part of the creation', namely, poor and proud gentlewomen who, having been educated 'genteelly' as the phrase is, could not maintain themselves but were reduced to a piteous dependency on 'the insolence' of wealthier relatives. To such as these, provided they were of unblemished character, Millenium Hall opened its doors. The rules required that each resident should deposit her private fortune, great or small, in the common stock; each had her own bedroom, but all shared the 'eating parlour' and drawing-room. Books and musical instruments were provided for general use, and in sickness the generous patronesses paid all charges. Any lady who behaved imprudently, pettishly, or turbulently could be dismissed on the vote of a three-quarters majority of the community. For the first year the foundresses cultivated among the residents, who numbered about thirty, 'that sort of dis-

[1] Cf. Climenson, *Elizabeth Montagu*, ii, p. 78. The book aroused much interest, and by 1778 had gone through four editions.

position which is most productive of peace'. They were exhorted to the duty of service, and united in works of mercy for their poorer neighbours. When any were found to have a special taste for gardening, drawing, music, reading, or any manual or ornamental pursuit, they received every help in cultivating it.[1]

The recrudescence of the conventual ideal in this shape is noteworthy: it had an unexpected attractiveness for the eighteenth-century mind. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu acknowledged that the project of an English monastery was a favourite scheme of her own at the age of fifteen. 'Had I then been mistress of an independent fortune', she told her daughter, 'I would certainly have executed it, and elected myself lady abbess. Then would you and your ten children have been lost for ever.'[2]

The love of a secluded life drew two other friends, Lady Eleanor Butler and the Hon. Sarah Ponsonby, who belong to the same group, into a studious retirement of fifty years' duration (1779–1829) in the Vale of Llangollen, where their memory is still held dear. Their establishment is described in the correspondence of an ardent disciple, Anna Seward, the Swan of Lichfield, and her high-flown style cannot altogether dispel the air of romance which hangs about the Ladies of Llangollen; the one short and plump, roundfaced and eager-eyed, witty and benevolent; the other graceful, and elegant, with a pensive air, a soft melancholy, a rare smile.[3]

Lady Eleanor especially had an inexhaustible fund of historical and traditional learning; she loved poetry, Dante above all, and spoke 'most modern languages'. The library where 'the Minervas' worked was fitted up in Gothic style, and mysteriously lit by lamps of ruby glass; in the window an Aeolian harp gave answer to the passing breezes; in the walls were cases of English, French, and Italian books superbly bound, and the miniatures of friends, including Madame de Genlis and her pupil Pamela.

[1] *Millenium Hall* (1778), pp. 80–5. [2] *Works*, vol. iv, p. 184.
[3] *Letters of Anna Seward*, vol. iv (Letter xx), *passim*.

XIV. THE LADIES OF LLANGOLLEN IN THEIR LIBRARY

(After a contemporary print)

'The library where the "Minervas" worked was fitted up in Gothic style and mysteriously lit by lamps of ruby glass', p. 424

The ladies, in the fashion of their girlhood, were great gardeners; they even tried to give a more practical turn to Anna Seward's ecstacies, 'annexing in her ideas vegetation and sentiment'.[1] They were also farmers, on a miniature scale, kept one cow in a spotless dairy-house, 'the least curiously elegant object of this magic domain', and made butter 'without manual operation' in a tiny churn.

Another friend of the Ladies of Llangollen and a welcome visitor at their retreat was Elizabeth Smith, one of the most attractive figures in this group of women-scholars. Hannah More coupled her name with that of Elizabeth Carter, but if, in some sense, the last of the Blue-Stockings, she had also affinities with the latter-day student. She was born in 1776 and educated mainly by her mother, who had no special claim to learning. Elizabeth owed her remarkable acquirements to her own industry, her brilliant linguistic gifts, the imaginative ardour with which she launched out on the adventure of scholarship. She taught herself, with scarcely any help, nine languages including, Hebrew, Arabic, and Persian,[2] learning with extraordinary facility, and a thoroughness to which her translations of Klopstock's letters and still more of the Book of Job bear witness. The study of words and of the ideas they conveyed was her passion; when she died there were found among her papers 'thirteen folio pages closely written, containing near a thousand words written in Hebrew, Arabic, and Persic, to show the resemblance between those languages',[3] and innumerable other words from obscure African and Chinese dialects. Despite this weight of learning she remained a simple-hearted ardent girl, a lover of adventure, of Nature in wild and romantic aspects—she climbed Snowdon one moonlight night to see dawn from the summit, and the tops of the Welsh hills wrapped in 'a cap of snow as soft

[1] Ib., Letter xxviii, p. 143.

[2] *Fragments in Prose and Verse*, by Miss Elizabeth Smith, with some account of her Life and Character by H. M. Bowdler, p. 264.

[3] Bowdler, p. 135.

as down'. She was eager to think her own thoughts and wrestle out her own problems, although careful to make herself 'a kind of solitude', and hide her face from others when she read a book that moved or delighted her. A woman's learning seemed to her 'like the fine clothes of an upstart who is anxious to exhibit to all the world the riches so unexpectedly acquired'. A man's, on the contrary, was 'like hereditary rank, which, having grown up with him, and being in a manner interwoven with his nature, he is almost unconscious of possessing it'.[1] Like Anne Baynard's and Mary Evelyn's, Elizabeth's bright spirit wore out too early her bodily strength: she died of a decline in her thirtieth year, 'Alma beata e bella'.

6. *The Eighteenth-Century Curriculum*

The writers of improving letters, especially Mrs. Chapone, provide an admirable picture of the curricula for women's studies sanctioned by contemporary opinion; a picture which may be supplemented for the close of the period by works in essay-form, such as Gisborne's *Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex*, and, more particularly, Dr. Erasmus Darwin's *Plan for the Conduct of Female Education in Boarding-Schools*.

A valuable ground-plan of instruction is supplied by the Table of Contents of Mr. Bennett's letters. His work, and indeed with but slight modifications, all works of the same type, recommended in the following order:

i. Religious Knowledge, with a List of proper Writers.

ii. Polite Knowledge as it related to the Belles Lettres in general; Epistolary Writing, History, the Lives of particular Persons, Geography, Natural History, Astronomy, Poetry, Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Heraldry, Voyages, Travels, &c.

iii. Accomplishments, as displayed in Needlework, Embroidery, Drawing, Music, Dancing, Dress, Politeness, &c.

iv. Prudential Conduct and Maxims with respect to Amusements, Love, Courtship, Marriage, &c.

[1] Bowdler, p. 151.

To follow out in more detail some of these recommendations may help us to understand the process by which girls' education in the upper and middle classes passed from the desultory teaching of a few ornamental subjects to that which Hannah More called 'the furore of accomplishments'; passed to the acquirement of the reading-habit indeed, but with this, in the absence of any sound scholastic method, to the accumulation of unrelated facts and miscellaneous fragments of information.

In every scheme of our letter-writers religious and moral instruction on a reasonable basis plays a large part, and is coloured according to the tenets of the author. Wilkes's chapters on this subject, long-drawn-out and argumentative, are yet good examples of their class, written from the Anglican standpoint, and of interest because they link the mid-century teaching of religion with that of the Age of Anne. At the outset he restates the argument from the material world to the existence of an All-wise Creator. The study of 'natural philosophy', so often commended to girl-pupils, had always this reverential basis: as our author expressed it, 'Let us inquire whence it is we have our Breath, the Comforts of Light and Heat, the Fruits of the Earth, the Faculties of the Mind, the Accession of our Age, the Growth of our Bodies. . . . By this Contemplation the Mind naturally aspires to Praises of its divine Original.'[1] Yet a woman should pause before she makes philosophic inquiry into her own being and should probe it only with the utmost caution. 'The Study of Metaphysics is too deep and laborious for her Sex to engage in . . . nor is it safe for a young Person to dive into the Mysteries of this Study':[2] she must be content with that knowledge of God and of the spirit of man which Revelation imparts. 'I exhort you', he urges, 'above all things to pay the greatest Deference to the Deity. Undertake nothing, whether more or less important, without first calling up and consulting him; and let your liking or disliking, your doing or not doing anything be

[1] Wilkes, pp. 17, 18. [2] Ib., p. 26.

always governed by this Principle of Duty.' More than learning, or pleasure, Devotion brings with it a serene gladness. 'When we are in Company with our God', are Wilkes's words, 'with our Redeemer, with our dearest and best of Friends, our Hearts burn with Love, exult with Gratitude, swell with Hope and triumph in the Consciousness of that Presence which everywhere surrounds us.' Yet this sincere and even passionate outburst is checked at once to remind the young learner that zeal has to be tempered with prudence and cool reason, in order to prevent degeneration from 'a steady masculine Piety into the weaknesses of Enthusiasm and Superstition'. The writer's rules for prayer are practical and full of wisdom for the young aspirant to the Christian life.

'Never pray in a Hurry', he advises. 'There is a wide Difference between praying, and reading or repeating Prayers. . . . Let your Prayers be frequent and fervent, but not long; for Persons especially of your Age either grow tired or wander into Thoughts upon other Things. . . . Prayer is the noblest Exercise of the Soul and the highest Imitation of the Blest above; therefore . . . rejoice in the Beginning of every Day.'[1] Or again, on the subject of churchgoing, 'Never absent yourself from the public Service of the Church when your Health permits you. . . . Even in regard to good Breeding, Time and Place are to be considered in all our Actions. Giggling, Chatting, Ogling, Stifling of Laughter, Flurting the Fan or any other careless Airs in Church are Instances not only of bad Manners but likewise of the greatest Impiety. . . . Through all the Service join with Heart and Voice . . . offer up your Thanksgivings and Praises with a solemn religious Joy and imbibe the Sermon with patience and candor. . . .'[2]

His rules for the behaviour of a Christian woman in society are no less admirable: they are directed against calumny and censure, against scandal, tattling and backbiting, against indiscreet reproofs which are 'like Plumb-cakes stuck with Thorns'.

History. The space occupied by Polite Knowledge is, proportionately to Religion, very small. In the chapters

[1] Wilkes, p. 67. [2] Ib., p. 70.

which Mrs. Chapone devotes to intellectual interests a foremost place is given to History, with Geography and Chronology as indispensable adjuncts; to studies, that is to say, first brought into fashion for women by Queen Mary, and further recommended by Rollin's popular *Méthode*. Her view of History includes Ancient, Medieval, and Modern, the histories of England and Scotland, a beginning of European and a special study of French history, on the ground that 'the French nation are peculiarly interesting to us from the extent of their dominion and influence, their supposed superiority in elegance and politeness, their eminence in the Arts and Sciences, and that intercourse of thought . . . which subsists between us by the mutual communication of literary productions'.[1] Her method is to give her pupil, by means of a well-arranged course of reading, a general survey, and then to concentrate on the history and memoirs of particular reigns or periods. 'If', she says, 'the plan is felt to be too large, comfort yourself with the assurance that a taste for history will grow and improve by reading . . . that you will insensibly be led on from one degree of knowledge to another.'[2]

She has always in mind a kind of post-graduate course for a girl of fifteen whose school-days are normally over. Like all the writers of her group she insists on the importance of prolonged self-education: 'If you waste', she urges, 'the next 3 or 4 years of your life which are the prime season of improvement, believe me you will hereafter bitterly regret their loss.' Consequently her ideas presuppose a more or less developed intelligence and some real love of books. Those she recommends, with emphasis on the difficulty of finding history books without party bias, are chiefly solid and standard works such as Rollin's *Ancient History*, Robertson's *Charles V* and his *History of Scotland*, Mezerai's *History of France*, Voltaire's *Louis XIV*.

[1] *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind addressed to a Young Lady*, by Mrs. Chapone, 3rd edition (1774), vol. ii, p. 214.

[2] Ib., p. 222.

A closer acquaintance discloses the ambition that her pupil's memory should be a storehouse of facts, and her strong belief in an elementary Pelmanism, as an aid to enriching the mind with unrelated incidents; thus to acquire the necessary geographical background, she says,

'It may be an useful and agreeable method when you learn the situation of any important country, to join with that knowledge some one or two leading facts or circumstances concerning it, so that its particular property may always put you in mind of the situation and the situation in like manner recall the particular property. . . . Thus to join with Egypt *the nurse and parent of arts and of superstition*—with Persia, *shocking despotism and perpetual revolutions*—with ancient Greece, *freedom and genius*—with Scythia, *hardness and conquest*, are hints which you may make use of as you please.'[1]

She leans heavily upon a framework of chronological data, but has at the same time a curious dread of too much precision in a girl's studies. She preferred what one of her predecessors had commended as 'a genteel and speculative knowledge'. 'I do not wish your knowledge to be exact and masterly', she declares, 'but such only as is necessary for the purpose of understanding history and without which even a newspaper would be unintelligible.'[2] If all this appears trivial and elementary, the low standards of the day must not be forgotten, nor the many women who disclaimed all knowledge of dates and epochs, met every historic reference with an ignorant stare, and were even proud of their unlettered condition.[3]

It need scarcely be said that for Mrs. Chapone, as for all her fellow letter-writers, the moral aspect of history was of the first importance: 'Alas! my dear', she wrote in warning to her niece at her entrance on this field of study, 'shall I venture to tell you that the history of the world is little else than a shocking account of the wickedness and folly of the ambitious!'[4] So with Mr. Wilkes, history was

[1] *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind addressed to a Young Lady*, by Mrs. Chapone, 3rd edition (1774), p. 150.

[2] Ib., p. 149. [3] Ib., p. 178. [4] Ib., p. 200.

'experience gained at the expence of others',[1] and with Mr. Bennett, a knowledge in epitome of the human heart.[2] *The Polite Lady* allowed that every accomplished woman should have 'a tolerable knowledge of history in general', but considered biography a species of history particularly adapted to girls; 'instead of wars, sieges, victories or great achievements, which are not so much within the province of a female, it presents those domestick anecdotes and events which come more forcibly home to her bosom and her curiosity'.[3]

Natural History and Philosophy. Natural History and Natural Philosophy, which included Astronomy, had the same peculiarly feminine appeal; they were an important adjunct to religious training; they were 'amusing', healthful, and already, in the case of botany, 'particularly fashionable'. Mrs. Chapone describes how she was carried away with astonishment and rapture at her first lesson in Astronomy when taught to look upon the stars as 'worlds formed like ours for a variety of inhabitants'; the idea was 'perfectly new'; the entertainment 'sublime'; her sensations, from the prospect of infinite beneficence bursting on her girlish imagination, defied description. She longed for her niece to share her vivid experience, and it could be done with little effort: 'a few books on the subject and those of the easiest sort, with some of the common experiments may be sufficient for your purpose which is to enlarge your mind and to excite in it the most profound adoration.'[4] Dr. Darwin, as a man of Science, thought that Natural History should be taught before the history of mankind, as an easier and therefore a more attractive subject to young girls. Children, he said, were charmed with Bewick's 'account of quadrupedes', with the prints and tale-pieces: they should be allowed to visit the collections of foreign animals from time to time on exhibition in England; since an examination of the objects

[1] Wilkes, p. 152. He adds, 'and to improve conversation'.
[2] Cf. Bennett, vol. i, Letter xlvii, p. 173.
[3] Bennett, vol. i, p. 184.
[4] Chapone, vol. ii, pp. 140–1.

themselves was far more instructive than any picture or description could be.[1] In the interests of scientific knowledge he also recommended educational visits, in the summer holidays, to cotton works, potteries, ironworks, foundries and manufactories of all kinds. Further he advocated the addition of Botany, Chemistry, 'which surprises and enchants', and of Mineralogy to the school time-table; elder students might best acquire an outline of the mathematical sciences, namely astronomy, mechanics, hydrostatics, and optics, with the 'curious' addition of electricity and magnetism, by attending 'the lectures in experimental philosophy which are occasionally exhibited by itinerant philosophers'. The lack of simple school manuals on scientific subjects this writer felt to be a great difficulty in the way of advancement. The earliest of Mrs. Marcet's *Conversations*, which were intended to supply this requirement, and had a wide popularity, appeared within five years of Dr. Darwin's *Plan*. His suggestions indeed went much beyond anything hitherto envisaged by boarding-school mistresses, but it is difficult to discover how far any form of scientific teaching, other than catechisms and the use of the globes, was adopted in eighteenth-century schools. Yet already, for some ten years when Darwin's book appeared (1799), Caroline Herschel, night by night had watched, and swept the heavens, and written till sunrise; while Fanny Burney (who was afraid to learn Latin) had gone full of curiosity to see her recent discovery, the first 'lady's comet'.[2] Mary Somerville also was studying the stars at her bedroom window, and mastering abstruse mathematical treatises, the mere names of which filled her friends with dismay. The latest accession to the feminine curriculum aroused, at least in this stage, amazement rather then obloquy. Much water had flowed by since Steele mocked at Abraham Thrifty's nieces who disputed on the magnetic virtues of the loadstone and the pressure of the atmosphere, and,

[1] Darwin, section x, p. 24, and section xv, p. 43.
[2] *Diary*, vol. iii, p. 110.

through them, at all perverse-minded females who read Locke and understood the mathematics.[1]

Poetry. Mrs. Chapone included the Historical Plays of Shakespeare in her list of works indispensable for a student of the drama of humanity, and regarded him as the greatest master of nature and 'most perfect characteriser of men and manners'.[2] She had the decided taste for poetry typical of a generation which 'industriously inquired' after the elder and half-forgotten poetical writers. In 1737 there had appeared the earliest anthology of English poetry made by a woman, namely *The Muses' Library* of Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper, which included selections from a series of writers beginning with Langland and Gower and ending with Samuel Daniel.[3]

Mrs. Chapone's preferences were less antiquarian. She had an intense appreciation of Milton's poems and especially of *Paradise Lost*, to which Addison's criticism in the *Spectator* had introduced many women-readers. 'Our great English poet Milton', she wrote, 'is as far above my praise as his *Paradise Lost* is above anything which I am able to read except the sacred writers.'[4]

The Classics. Her attitude towards classical studies was no less characteristic of her day: she thought it needless to commend to her pupil translations of Homer and Virgil 'which everybody reads that reads at all'; on the other hand she advised her to be at the pains of learning Italian, in order to read the *Æneid* in Annibale Caro's spirited rendering, rather than to venture incautiously on the unfeminine study of the Latin tongue.[5] Her point of view resembled that of Fanny Burney, who at one time

[1] *Spectator*, No. 242.

[2] *Letters*, vol. ii, p. 127.

[3] *The Muses' Library, or a series of English Poetry from the Saxons to the Reign of King Charles II . . . being A General Collection of almost all the old valuable Poetry extant now so industriously inquired after tho' rarely to be found but in the Studies of the Curious . . .* (1737).

[4] *Letters*, vol. ii, p. 129, Mrs. Thrale read aloud to her daughters Milton, Shakespeare, Pope, and Young's works 'from head to heel', as well as Warton's and Johnson's criticisms of the poets, and a complete programme of dramatic and classical writing (cf. *Diary and Letters of Madame d'Arblay* (1854), vol. ii, p. 256).

[5] *Letters*, vol. ii, p. 131.

took a Latin lesson every morning from Dr. Johnson but scrupled to devote so much time to acquiring something she would 'always dread to have known'.[1] The learned and lachrymose Sophy Streatfield, a prominent figure in the famous *Diary*, was considered to have lost in charm what she gained by a knowledge of Greek: while another lady had her Latin lessons interrupted by a brother who disliked her studying the dead languages and one day burnt all her books.[2] Opinions on this subject were sharply divided, and while Dr. Johnson, Mrs. Carter, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu were prominent figures in the one camp, the other was crowded by men and women who preferred Pope, Swift, and the *Spectator*, to the reading of Homer.

Study of English. Like Rollin, the letter-writers emphasized the need for a careful study of the mother tongue. 'Though I am not against a young Lady's amusing herself with French, Italian or Latin,' wrote Wetenhall Wilkes, 'yet since it is English that one educated in England must have constant Use of, it is obvious to think that to be the Language she ought chiefly to cultivate and wherein most care should be taken to polish and perfect her Stile.'[3] Two arts were in favour as short cuts to an elegant style in English composition, the Art of Reading Aloud and the Art of Epistolary Writing.

To read aloud well was the 'first and greatest article in a young Lady's Education'. A good reader understood the laws of accent and emphasis, how to pronounce clearly, modulate her voice pleasantly, and avoid reading too loudly or affectedly, or 'on a tone', all of which marked a faulty upbringing. 'Your Voice', advised the writer already quoted, 'must humour the Sense. In the reading of a Newspaper or the Relation of any Thing that has been done the Accents must be varied very little; but where the Subject is affecting or persuasive the Manner of pronouncing must be more strong and passionate.'[4]

[1] *Diary*, loc. cit., vol. i, p. 204.
[2] Ib., vol. iv, p. 317.
[3] Wilkes, loc. cit., p. 149.
[4] Ib., p. 141.

Boarding-school girls were supposed to devote much time to this subject, and an amusing description of how not to read is given by Portia for Sophia's warning:[1]

'Your Aunt Filmer reads with such a canting tone as grates the ears of the whole company. She has frequently almost sung me to sleep, though reading one of the most diverting books in the world. Your cousin Pulteney . . . reads with such hurry and rapidity, and such neglect of the proper stops and pauses, that the most attentive hearer cannot understand one sentence she pronounces: whilst Mrs. Dashwood reads in such a slow and slovenly manner and draws out the words to such an immoderate length that nobody has patience to follow her. Mrs. Nugent reads with such a loud and shrill voice as stuns the ears of the whole audience. It might do very well in a public assembly but is altogether unfit for a tea-table; whereas Miss Littleton's accent is so faint and feeble that you must apply your ear almost to her mouth before you can understand the subject.'

A well-trained and sympathetic reader was in constant request, and contemporary diaries and memoirs prove the popularity of this kind of co-operative study: the *Diary* of Fanny Burney is the classic example; apart from her duty, as lady-in-waiting, to read aloud to Queen Charlotte and the Princesses, we hear much of the books 'in public reading' at her friends' houses.[2]

A branch of study equally indispensable for girls was the art of letter-writing: to write letters well was 'a very desirable excellence in a woman', and indeed the only art in which her sex admittedly carried off the laurels. Careful instruction lay behind the charming letters of that day and the standard of excellence was exacting. Mr. John Bennett no doubt had in mind Clarissa Harlowe, the peerless letter-writer, when he commended to Miss Lucy's imitation a female correspondent whose effusions astonished and delighted him: 'imagery, taste, pathos, spirit, fire and ease vied with each other which should be the most

[1] *Polite Lady*, p. 5.

[2] e.g. At the Lockes' they read aloud Mme de Sévigné's Letters and Captain Cook's last Voyage. Fanny Burney reads *The Task* to Queen Charlotte, and Mr. Fairly reads to Fanny *The Pleasures of the Imagination.*

conspicuous feature in the productions of her pen. They came not from the head, it was the heart which wrote them. They were not faultless but they were impassioned.'[1]

In schools much attention was paid to the first essential, the 'necessary improvement' of a clear handwriting. Opinions varied as to the best kind for girls to cultivate. Mr. Wilkes thought the Italian hand unfit for business, and mean in appearance 'if not wrote genteely well', and recommended his pupil to acquire a fair round-hand.[2] Portia on the contrary, while she assured Sophia that no one could aspire to the character of an accomplished woman who could not write distinctly and legibly, regarded round-hand only as a stepping-stone to a neat running or Italian hand.[3] Dr. Darwin characteristically dwelt on the question of the correct posture in writing:

'A proper manner of holding the pen, or pencil or needle, with an easy but graceful attitude of the person and an agreeable moderate attention of the countenance should first be taught: for which purposes an inclined desk has many advantages over an horizontal table . . . as the body is thence less bent forwards; and the light in general situations more vividly reflected to the eye.'[4]

Portia, in *The Polite Lady*, imparted the secret of acquiring epistolary skill, and urged Sophia, who had recently left school, to begin, as early as possible, a correspondence with some of her absent friends, preferably those who lived in the country and would value news from London.

'There is only one general advice I would give you'; Portia continued, 'when you are going to write a letter sit down and compose your mind: disengage yourself from every other care and concern; recall to your memory the idea of your absent friend; represent her to your imagination as if she were actually present and were conversing with you; and after you have heated your fancy and warmed your heart by this imaginary conversation, then give full scope to the natural overflowings of your soul; take the pen and write down

[1] Bennett, vol. i, p. 172.
[2] Wilkes, p. 186.
[3] *Polite Lady*, Letter iii, p. 11.
[4] Darwin, sect. iv, p. 15.

whatever comes uppermost in your mind without ceremony or restraint.'[1]

The familiar epistles recommended as models for a young lady's perusal were Pope's Letters, FitzOsborne's Letters and Pliny's Letters translated by Melmoth, but of all others Madame de Sévigné's were 'finished models of this kind'.

The third section of Bennett's time-table dealt with Accomplishments, at the moment when he wrote by far the most important subjects of instruction for girls. Of these, however, needlework and embroidery on an elaborate scale now held comparatively an unimportant position as school-subjects for young ladies. Already in Addison's day they were under suspicion, as being the occupations of dull industrious countrywomen. The *Spectator* railed upon the confection of needlework pieces on a large scale,[2] and its healthy influence helped to put completely out of favour 'tedious drudgeries in needlework fit only for the Hilpas and Nilpas that lived before the flood'.[3] The fondness for reading aloud gave embroidery a renewed lease of life in some family circles. 'Lady Lizard' of the *Guardian* (1713) furnished a gallery with chairs and couches of her own and her daughters' handiwork, and at the same time heard all Dr. Tillotson's sermons twice over.[4] A few years later Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, a needlewoman in spite of her learning, who had taught her daughter to be equally skilful, declared it to be as 'scandalous for a woman not to know how to use a needle as for a man not to know how to use a sword';[5] but she felt herself on this point out of touch with her contemporaries. The later educational writers recommended needlework with much reserve. Mrs. Chapone thought it important in a 'middling rank' only to save expense; she knew young ladies who 'made almost everything they wore', but preferred her niece, even at the cost of a genteel

[1] *Polite Lady*, p. 147.
[2] Cf. *Spectator*, No. 606.
[3] Ib., No. 609.
[4] *Guardian*, No. 155 (8 Sept. 1713).
[5] *Works*, vol. iv, p. 197.

appearance, to strengthen her health by exercise and her mind by reading. Bennett's Louisa indeed fitted into her '*regular* plan of employment' much exquisite fancy work upon baskets of flowers,[1] and in real life the daughters of George III were taught by a French lady 'a thousand ingenious uses of the needle';[2] but Lady Pennington wrote of embroidery contemptuously as a 'pretty amusement', and advised her daughter to undertake only such inexpensive work in gold, silver, and shades of silk as might be completed in a summer without tiring the fancy. It was an unwarrantable expense, she declared, to furnish whole apartments with 'the suppos'd work of a lady who perhaps never shaded two leaves in the artificial forest', but paid four times its value in hire and maintenance to some professional needlewoman for completing the tedious undertaking.[3]

Handicrafts of various kinds were still in vogue. The girls in the model school described in *Millenium Hall* (1778) learned wood-carving, engraving, and turnery, as well as painting and embroidery,[4] and they were able to decorate artistically the house of a poor widow they had befriended, by framing her pictures in shell-work and ornamenting her plain cabinets with a tracery of dried sea-weed.[5] These occupations were comparatively useful beside the 'Fillagree, Steel and Varnish Work' which found a place in the prospectus of Mrs. Voysey's School at Salisbury (1778), and the wax flowers and cut-paper adornments of his daughters' manufacture which, in Hannah More's tale, littered Farmer Bragwell's parlour.

[1] Bennett, vol. ii, p. 53. [2] *Diary of Mme d'Arblay*, vol. iii, p. 44.

[3] Pennington, p. 70. This was no new objection; cf. *Spectator*, vol. v, No. 328, p. 41, where the accomplished heroine spends incredible sums in embroidery, and 'keeps four French protestants continually employed in making divers pieces of superfluous furniture, as quilts, toilets, hangings for closets, beds, window curtains, easy chairs, and tabourets'. Nor has her husband any 'hopes of ever reclaiming her from this extravagance while she obstinately persists in thinking it a notable piece of good housewifery, because they are made at home and she has had some share in the performance'.

[4] *Millenium Hall*, p. 7. [5] Ib., p. 188.

XVIII

TOWARDS REVOLUTION, 1762–1800

1. *Introductory*

THE date 1762 has been chosen as a convenient one to mark the beginning of the third stage into which educational history in the eighteenth century may roughly be divided. It was the year of publication of Rousseau's *Émile* and it coincides with the opening of George III's reign. Both facts are of importance for our survey. The reigns of George I and George II reintroduced into English society influences of the same ill-omened kind as those which had disfigured the reign of Charles II, and the age of Mary and of Anne had done something to improve. A contemporary historian of women's character and genius is at pains to give some explanation of the change in the national spirit which he perceived on all sides. From personal observation it seemed to him, as he says, that the South Sea Scheme and other mercenary projects had produced 'a delirium of riches beyond what the most extravagant imagination can conceive'.[1]

To this sordid fever, women as well as men fell victims; 'public virtue was lost in the visions of private benefit; letters fell into contempt . . . love grew covetous and beauty venal'. Under George II and during the long ministry of Sir Robert Walpole astute advantage was taken of this widespread covetousness; bribery was rife; preferment no longer the reward of honourable conduct; the distinction of high character ceased from public life. Yet, our writer continues, 'people must always have something to be the foundation of self-applause'. Having lost their self-respect as citizens, they began to value themselves on elegant address, on the sumptuous luxury of their homes. The ruin of many noble families by 'visionary projects'

[1] *Essay on the Character, Manners, and Genius of Women.* Enlarged from the French of M. Thomas by Mr. Russell, vol. ii, p. 154 et seq.

led them to court alliances where wealth was now fast heaping up, namely with the sons and daughters of commerce. At the same time, the merchant had lost his distinguishing characteristics, his industry and frugality, and acquired luxurious habits: all ranks, ages, and sexes, without discrimination, aspired to the same distractions and emulated each other in the same round of enjoyment.

Such is the social background of those educational writers whose opinions we are now to consider; writers who, like Hannah More, Catharine Macaulay, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Maria Edgeworth, attacked the training in 'ornamental accomplishments' which parents and their daughters regarded as the means to a successful marriage; writers who deplored the inability to consider natural tastes, and the forgetfulness that a few glittering years of girlhood were not the whole of a woman's life. Rousseau's *Émile*, although it had a revolutionary effect on education in general, did nothing directly, indeed worse than nothing, to free girls from the bondage of caprice: except that beyond question it fanned to flame a righteous indignation.

Yet it must not be forgotten that sympathetic onlookers, during the later decades, were conscious of marked improvement, if only in the standard of literacy, among women. Fanny Burney, herself but a timid advocate of female learning, has recorded the opinions of other observers. Writing in 1771, she tells how Dr. Johnson commented to Mrs. Thrale, on 'the amazing progress made of late years in literature by the women', and how he had said, 'he was himself astonished at it, and . . . well remembered when a woman who could spell a common letter was regarded as accomplished; but now they vied with the men in everything'.[1] Burke also thought the age distinguished by producing extraordinary women. Another factor not to be overlooked was the improvement in the attitude of the Court towards reasonable occupation for girls' minds: the example of Queen Charlotte and

[1] *Diary*, vol. i, p. 199.

her daughters was, on the whole, sound and good, better than anything the country had seen for half a century past. Although not highly intellectual the royal ladies were by no means indifferent to literature, music, or art. Many books on girls' education were dedicated to the Queen, in terms not merely of conventional fitness. It had been said of the court of George II that the King was always furious at the sight of books, and that Caroline of Anspach, brought up to love reading, had to read secretly in her closet.[1] Those conditions had been superseded by others, more conducive to the quiet enjoyment of intellectual pursuits. The Queen borrows Dr. Burney's *German Tour*;[2] lends to her devoted lady-in-waiting Sarah Scott's *Filial Duty* and Hannah More's *Influence of Society on the Manners of the Great*,[3] and presents her with some of Mrs. Trimmer's Works.[4] She peruses with interest the *Paston Letters*[5] and Hunter's *Biographical Commentary on the Old Testament*;[6] for her tastes were serious, and she did not permit her daughters to read novels, even *Cecilia*, without episcopal sanction.[7] The princesses inherited their mother's fondness for the harpsichord and had lessons from Mr. Webb, a Windsor musician, while the Princess Elizabeth was something of an artist and designed illustrations for a poem on 'The Birth of Love'.[8]

All this had its salutary effect in less exalted homes. On the other hand the interest aroused by the writings of Mme de Genlis, who came into England as a refugee from the Revolution bringing with her a considerable reputation as an educationist,[9] unfortunately had its share in encouraging the steadfast pursuit of accomplishments. Her books, especially *Adèle et Théodore* and the *Théâtre d'Éducation des Enfants*, were widely read and are included in contemporary lists of recommended school-books. Just as she carried to excess the principles of Fénelon bearing

1 W. M. Thackeray, *Four Georges* (Morley) p. 48. 2 *Diary*, vol. iii, p. 162.
3 Ib., vol. iv, p. 89. 4 Ib., vol. iii, p. 192. 5 Ib., vol. iii, p. 268.
6 Ib., vol. iv, p. 227. 7 Ib., vol. v, p. 41. 8 Ib., vol. v, p. 58.
9 Under the Empire she was nominated one of the first woman-inspectors of girls' schools in France. Rousselot, vol. ii, p. 263.

on 'indirect instruction', so she carried to extravagance the pursuit of the arts, and particularly the consecration of hours of every day and years of youth to music of a showy kind: she avowed in later life, says her historian, that she would have done better to advocate for her pupils an elementary knowledge of common law.

2. *Rousseau and the Education of Girls*

Rousseau's *Émile* was, as Lord Morley has remarked, an important factor in the movement towards the restoration of family life which stirred French society in his day.[1] In such a book one might fairly expect to find a fresh, even an enlightened, view of the position of women, a stirring conception of the best preparation for duties so exacting as those of motherhood and the guardianship of young children. Such expectations do not find fulfilment, indeed they could scarcely find fulfilment at Rousseau's hands. In Émile he elaborated an ideal type of manhood and the stages of education through which a young life might most securely pass to maturity. Since marriage was an essential part of a rounded human experience his hero must be provided with a wife, who should be the embodiment of perfect womanhood. The fashionable methods of moulding a raw girl into a society dame could scarcely be expected to produce anything approximating to ideal purity and simplicity; the model was as petty, ridiculous, and artificial as the processes were fatal to everything sincere and admirable in female character. It remained for Émile's creator to evolve both the type of his companion and the education befitting her destiny. Unluckily Rousseau's personal experiences, so far from qualifying him for such a task, stultified his intentions at the outset. He might look into his own heart and draw out of its imperfections, its unfulfilled aspirations, an image of the man he had failed to be but would have other men become. He had no power to divine from

[1] John Morley, *Rousseau*, vol. ii, p. 200.

his knowledge of the women with whom he had been disastrously associated what the other sex might attain at its highest. It was the fatal nemesis of a disordered existence that he was incapable of visualizing any woman other than the capricious or feeble tool of men's appetites.

Rousseau's failure is the more complete because of his inability or unreadiness to apply to one sex the lofty principles which in the other case he gloried in vindicating. In the education of Émile the old routine of prejudice was to be replaced by a new system, dictated by natural impulses; for Sophie and all her sex, the old was by no means put away, but a quasi-reasonable basis was given to the inhibitions which had hampered female education from the Middle Ages and even earlier.

At the outset a certain equality between the sexes, due to their common humanity, is admitted, but this equality speedily disappears when their diverse functions come to be described. A man is of necessity strong and active, his role is to desire and to achieve his desire; a woman's obligation, on the other hand, is to be passive and yielding: the right to be weak is a necessity of her very existence; she is created definitely to give pleasure to the opposite sex; she is not 'an end in herself', and can only be qualified in relation to some man; she is beautiful or wise only when men think her so; her conduct cannot be honourable unless her reputation for honour is unquestioned: 'L'opinion est le tombeau de la vertu parmi les hommes, et son trône parmi les femmes.'[1] Infidelity in a woman is worse than in a man because it breaks all natural ties: how frightful is the position of a husband who has no confidence in his wife's faithfulness.[2]

From the foregoing it follows logically that, as in general society so in the department of education, a woman's training is significant only in relation to men. Once it is conceded that the man and the woman are differently constituted in character and temperament it

[1] *Émile ou de l'Éducation*, par J. J. Rousseau, Citoyen de Genève (1794), tome v, p. 25.

[2] Ib., p. 15.

must be plain that they cannot require the same instruction. The essential thing is to follow Nature's lead. To cultivate manly qualities in a woman, to neglect her proper attributes, is to make an initial blunder; while vainly trying to usurp masculine prerogatives she falls short of those within her grasp and loses half the prize. 'Croyez-moi', Rousseau addresses himself to the judicious mother, 'ne faites point de votre fille un honnête homme, comme pour donner un démenti à la Nature; faites-en une honnête femme, et soyez sûr qu'elle en vaudra mieux pour elle et pour nous.'[1] This may be well enough, but what, one may ask, is the author's conception of a sincere womanly character? At the outset his psychological study of girlhood compares very unfavourably with that of Fénelon. Both writers, for example, appreciate the value of an appeal to sentiment as a motive force where the reason is as yet undeveloped. Fénelon's appeal is to be made to the sentiment of personal affection: Rousseau's characteristically to the sentiment of personal vanity, the insatiable thirst for admiration. The little girl, he tells us, plays untiringly at dressing and undressing her doll from a natural impulse to prepare for the happy day when she will deck herself before her mirror with chiffons and gems, engrossed with her own loveliness.[2] He has indeed good reasons for distrusting any reliance on the affections; it is hard to arrive at the truth about sentiment; girls are such deceptive creatures; 'Elles sont flatteuses, dissimulées et savent de bonne heure se déguiser'.[3]

Instead of the touch of sympathetic understanding which gives charm to Fénelon's pages, there is everywhere the covert sneer, a puerility which is in itself an insult. Rousseau's young girl makes O's incessantly when she learns to write, until catching sight of herself in the mirror in a constrained and unbecoming attitude she throws down the pen and refuses to make any more O's. She is only persuaded to resume her lessons because,

[1] *Émile ou de l'Éducation*, par J. J. Rousseau, Citoyen de Genève (1794), tome v, p. 23. [2] Ib., p. 32. [3] Ib., p. 38.

without knowing how to write, she cannot mark her linen and so prevent her sisters making use of what is her own property.[1]

The liberty which Nature indicates as the right environment for growing boys Rousseau cannot bring himself to concede to their sisters, even to his Sophie. Generally speaking he has all a medievalist's dread of any form of independence for the dependent sex. Girls are naturally lazy and indocile. They must have wariness and industry forced upon them by some means or other, for all their lives long they must perforce be dragooned by the proprieties—most bitter yoke!—and the sooner they learn to check caprice at the will of other people the better for them.[2]

On the other hand, from time to time cherished principles reassert themselves in the confused outline. Girls are indeed to be forced into submissiveness to the will of their masters, but they are never to be compelled to learn reading until they ask to be taught because they have realized its value. Discipline in this direction is an infringement upon natural liberty. In regard to a girl's instruction, this 'go-as-you-please' can be the more securely recommended because Rousseau on the whole prefers girls to remain ignorant as long as possible. After all why should they know how to read and write early in life when they have as yet no household affairs to control? Not a few have made no good use of the fatal knowledge.[3] Why, again, should girls have any real need of a teacher, whether master or mistress? In those arts which have, after all, only gracefulness as their ultimate end, everything, everybody, may serve well enough as an instructor, father, mother, brother, sister, the friend, the governess, the mirror, a girl's natural tastes. Agreeable talents have been far too much systematized and spontaneity imperilled. Why need a singer study musical notes? Why should a lively brunette be forced to sing in the same style as a blonde with languishing eyes? The teachers follow

[1] Ib., p. 36. [2] Ib., p. 37. [3] Ib., p. 35.

a routine, but they understand nothing of their art; a girl does better without their help.[1]

Even in the darkest ages a girl's need of spiritual training had been recognized, however inadequately: how does Rousseau propose to meet that need? Here too his ideas are no less ill-defined and in many respects no less repugnant.

A horror of insincerity makes him dread 'the little saints who are forced to pass their infancy in prayer'. Girls may indeed be talked to about religion when they are young for the cynical reason that, if one waited till they were intellectually capable of discussing profound questions, the moment might never arrive.[2] Care must be taken not to make religion, or indeed any subject of study tedious or melancholy to them; they are to learn nothing, not even prayers by heart, but to be encouraged by personal example. Let them see their teacher regularly engaged in prayer—above all make them love religion.[3]

Mystery is to be eliminated; all dogmatic teaching confined within the narrow circle which bears directly on morality.

'Ne faites pas de vos filles des théologiennes et des raisonneuses; ne leur apprenez des choses du ciel que ce qui sert à la sagesse humaine; accoutumez-les à se sentir toujours sous les yeux de Dieu, à l'avoir pour temoin de leurs actions, de leur pensées, de leur vertu, de leurs plaisirs; à faire le bien sans ostentation, parce qu'il l'aime; à souffrir le mal sans murmure, parce qu'il les en dédommagera; à être enfin tous les jours de leur vie ce qu'elles seront bien-aises d'avoir été lorqu'elles comparaitront devant lui.'[4]

But when, thus admirably, the victory of sincerity and of reason is accomplished, when the affections are captured, the homage secured, everything may be undone at the waving of a wand. 'A woman's conduct', we read in astonishment, 'is subservient to public opinion, her belief to authority. Every daughter must have her mother's

[1] *Émile ou de l'Éducation*, par J. J. Rousseau, Citoyen de Genève (1784), tome v, pp. 52. 53.
[2] Ib., p. 58.
[3] Ib., p. 61.
[4] Ib., p. 74.

religion; every wife, her husband's; all women are libertine or devotees, they cannot combine wisdom and piety.[1]

In his picture of Émile Rousseau was deeply indebted to the sane and sturdy precepts of Locke: in studying girls, except in one respect, he had no such able counsellor. As we have seen, Locke dealt specifically with female education chiefly on the physical side; and it is here that Rousseau's theories are of greater value.

Like Fénelon, Rousseau preferred the Greek methods of healthy moderate exercise, as he conceived them, to the needless severities of Sparta; he admired the easy loose-flowing dress of the Grecian woman rather than tight garments and the fashionable compression by means of bandages and whalebone stays, which was pushed to further extremities in England even than in France: he failed to see any attractiveness in a woman cut in two like a wasp; 'cela choque la vue et fait souffrir l'imagination'. In his opinion all restraint upon the natural form was a mark of bad taste; life, health, reasonableness, well-being were the first consideration; there was no gracefulness without a corresponding ease; delicacy was not synonymous with langour, nor had unhealthiness any power to charm.

Rousseau gives some few details as to the culture best suited to women, which is at all times to have a practical bearing. Women must study men, or such objects of knowledge as are concerned only with taste. Any subject they take up must be looked upon as a task rather than a talent. Thus Sophie sings like a bird but does not know a note of music: she enjoys needlework and lace-making because it shows off her hands: she is no reader but derives sufficient knowledge from the parental conversation, her own reflexions and the observations she can make in her own small world.[2] Her parents, when she shows an undue curiosity, point her forward to the enlightenment to be gained from her future husband.[3] Accordingly she thinks

[1] Ib. p. 59. [2] Ib., pp. 109–13. [3] Ib., p. 116.

constantly of her lover that is to be, and feels herself created to make happy 'l'honnête homme'.[1] Her parents, with unparalleled generosity, allow her a free choice in marriage, but Sophie, one is surprised to learn, has a high opinion of the rights of her sex,[2] and has been so educated that she cannot love a man of her own generation; the hero of the only book she has read, Fénelon's *Télémaque*, is the phantom of her dreams.[3] When Émile comes upon the scene, she turns to him as a heaven-sent instructor, sings and dances with him, improves herself in drawing by imitating his attempts. Émile gives his bride lessons in philosophy, physics, mathematics, and history, and gives them on his knees before her: Sophie does not remember a great deal of what she hears; after all a woman can only skim the surface of sciences based upon reason, and even under marital guidance she still makes best progress in morality and 'choses de goût'.[4]

3. *Rousseau and some English Writers*

As a writer on the education of girls Rousseau appealed more forcibly to the average Englishman of his day than to the Englishwoman who was intelligent enough to analyse and to comment upon his theories. It was not perhaps remarkable that men should admire an ideal of womanhood whose whole *raison-d'être* was to charm and to minister to the superior sex. As Gisborne wrote poignantly, in his *Enquiry* already quoted, there were but three aspects in which the female character was of importance: next to the duties of motherhood, these consisted in their 'contributing daily and hourly to the comfort of husbands . . ., and other relations, and friends in the intercourse of domestic life, under every vicissitude': and lastly, 'in forming and improving the general manners, dispositions and conduct of the other sex, by society and example'.[5]

[1] *Émile ou de l'Éducation*, par J. J. Rousseau, Citoyen de Genève (1794), tome v, p. 117. [2] Ib., pp. 121, 128. [3] Ib., p. 138.
[4] Ib. pp. 190–2. [5] *Enquiry*, chapter ii, p. 12.

XV. A Treatise on Calisthenic Exercises arranged for the Private Tuition of Ladies by Signor Voarino (1827)

'Dr. Erasmus Darwin attributed the pale faces of young people in school to the oversedentary lives they led and urged a greater activity to promote health and growth', p. 354

Just as Sophie was of significance only in relation to Émile, so might her admirers desire their own intercourse with wives, or even sisters, to become one prolonged adoration. Sophie's attractiveness lay to a great extent in the 'simplicity and naturalness' on which Rousseau laid so much stress, in a manner the opposite of that which fashionable education encouraged. A writer who described with disgust in one section of his book the young Lady Harriett newly arrived from boarding-school, 'incessantly practising little arts and adjusting all her airs and graces to engage admiration';[1] in another drew the portrait of an English Sophie of irresistible charm. Unlike Lady Harriett, his Louisa is transparently sincere: the ground work of her allurement is simplicity, 'an artless, undesigning, unstudied manner flowing from an innocent and virtuous heart which never seeks concealment, as having indeed nothing to conceal'. She is the child of nature, always welcome in company though her eyes flash no 'artificial lightning', and she does not lisp.

'*Another distinguishing grace* of Louisa', continues our author, with plentiful italics, 'is *softness*. She is (what *nature* intended her *to* be) *wholly* a woman. She has a quality that is the direct opposite to *manliness and vigour*. Her voice is gentle; her pronunciation delicate; her passions are never suffered to be *boisterous*; she never talks *politicks*; she never foams with anger; she is seldom seen in any *masculine* amusements; she does not practise *archery*. I will venture to prophesy that she will never canvas for votes at an election. I never saw her in an *unfeminine* dress, or her features discomposed with *play*. She *really* trembles with the apprehension of danger. She feels *unaffectedly* for every person exposed to it. A friend leaving her father's house, only for a short time, calls forth her concern. The farewell tear stands big in its transparent sluice. And whenever he returns the easy *undissembled* smile testifies her joy.'[2]

It must, however, be admitted that few writers bestowed on the 'Sophie' type of woman such unstinted admiration as the creator of Louisa. Others accepted Rousseau's portrayal with limitations.

[1] Bennett, vol. ii, p. 67.

[2] Ib., p. 45.

Lord Kames, while he allowed that the 'common course of European education' was far from seconding the undoubted purpose of nature, to make women 'fit companions for men of sense',[1] yet touched upon the fundamental weakness of *Émile*, the elimination of the wider social duties, as well as the oriental proclivities of its author. He observed drily that

'Cultivation of the female mind . . . where polygamy is indulged would be to them a deep misfortune by opening their eyes to their miserable condition. But in an opulent monarchy, where polygamy is prohibited, female education is of high importance, not singly with respect to private happiness, but with respect to society in general.'[2]

Another devout disciple of Rousseau was Thomas Day, the author of *Sandford and Merton*, whose own personal character—Dr. Edgeworth called him the most virtuous human being he had ever known[3]—made it inevitable that in imitating he should also transmute and elevate the master's pattern. Rousseau's social theory had so stimulating an effect upon the mind of Day, a young man of generous disposition, and chivalrous to the point of eccentricity, that it led him to make a remarkable educational experiment.

Nature, Rousseau had said, prepared Sophie to be the fitting bride of Émile; it only remained that he should succeed in finding her out where she awaited his choice.[4] Day, accordingly took steps to provide himself with the ideal wife. Feeling he was too unfashionable to win a woman's heart he determined to mould some little girl from her early years to be the creature of his imagination. He resolved to give her a taste for literature and science, for moral and 'patriotic' philosophy: she was to despise fashion, to be content to live in retirement, to devote her life to philanthropic abours among the poorest of

[1] Henry Home of Kames, *Sketches of the History of Man* (1819), Bk. I, Sk. 6, p. 315.
[2] Ib., p. 319.
[3] John Blackman, *A Memoir of the Life and Writings of Thomas Day* (1862), p. 126.
[4] *Émile*, loc. cit., vol. v, p. 142.

mankind. In her dress and diet she was to be 'as simple as a mountain girl, fearless and intrepid as the Spartan wives and Roman heroines'.[1] Having thus borrowed the salient features, less indeed from Sophie's than from Émile's portrait, he filled in the outlines with characteristics that matched his own peculiar temperament.

Accompanied by his friend John Bicknell he visited the Orphan Asylum at Shrewsbury and chose out a pretty flaxen-haired girl of twelve, whom he named 'Sabrina' from the river Severn flowing close at hand, and 'Sidney' after Algernon Sidney, his hero; later on he went to the Foundling Hospital and selected a companion for Sabrina, to be called 'Lucretia'.[2] Could any scheme be more romantic, more quixotic and unpractical, less in the manner of Rousseau who had inspired it? In the sequel Day's experience of foster-fatherhood had all the elements of a tragi-comedy. He took his protegées to France without an English attendant. The children teased and perplexed him, quarrelled with one another, and finally caught the small-pox.[3] At the close of a weary year the party returned to England, and under the terms of his covenant with the Foundling Hospital, Day apprenticed Lucretia to a milliner on Ludgate Hill. In 1770 he visited Dr. Erasmus Darwin at Lichfield, and eventually, with Sabrina and a female household, settled at Stow-hill and became a member of an interesting and learned coterie, which included Darwin himself, the Herschels, Sir Joseph Banks, and occasionally Dr. Johnson.

Day now devoted himself to Sabrina's education: especially he endeavoured to fortify her mind against the dread of suffering and the acute sense of danger to which so many of her sex were liable. All his experiments were, however, doomed to failure. In vain he dropped melting sealing-wax on her arms, she could not endure the pain without flinching; he fired pistols at her skirts, loaded with powder, which she believed to be loaded with ball, and she started and screamed at the report. He invented

[1] Blackman, p. 37. [2] Ib., p. 59. [3] Ib., p. 61.

imaginary situations to test her self-control, and told her pretended secrets which she betrayed to the servants, as indeed he well deserved. At last he gave up his idea of marrying the luckless girl, and to some extent his faith in Rousseau's philosophy. He sent Sabrina to a boarding-school with an ample allowance, and at the end of three years she married John Bicknell, who had assisted at the ceremony in Shrewsbury Asylum years before. Where the master had had no pity even on his own helpless children, the disciple's generosity ceased only with his life. The two girls whose careers Day had thus strangely influenced grew up to be 'amiable and exemplary women', and to the end he remained their liberal benefactor. In 1778 he found a good and loyal wife in Esther Milner, who had received, by the irony of fate, an ordinary boarding-school education. For her benefit he renewed his experiments, 'hardened' her into robust health, allowed her no servants, and made her put away her harpsichord and music-books. She sometimes shed tears at the severity of the tests, but never murmured, lived very happily with her eccentric husband, and died of a broken heart at his tragic end.[1]

The History of Sandford and Merton, in which the young hero to a great extent is a self-portrait of the author, is Day's elaborate commentary on the principles of Rousseau. The strange experiment of educating children by means of situations artificially contrived to test their self-control or their moral perception, there finds abundant illustration. The claims of girls, to which Day had made perhaps a sufficient sacrifice, are dealt with in a few pages. Master Merton is 'set off' by Miss Matilda, who plays most divinely on the harpsichord, talks French even better than she does English, and draws the figure of a naked gladiator in masterly style. Sandford's companion-figure, Miss Sukey Simmons, takes a cold plunge-bath all the year round, rises by candle-light, rides 'a dozen miles upon a trotting horse', and strides happily over the country-

[1] Blackman, pp. 85–90.

side in sensible clothes. The uncle, who so often presides over the fortunes of well-educated girls, teaches her to read, but not to speak, French, and more erudite learning, such as the established laws of nature and a small degree of geometry. She is brought up to be an eminent housewife, 'which is now exploded by ladies in every rank and station as mean and vulgar', and sings agreeably, though quite ignorant of music; her uncle held the sensible opinion that 'human life is not long enough to throw away so much time upon the science of making a noise'.[1]

4. *Catharine Macaulay and Mary Wollstonecraft*

If Rousseau's views on female education were not unacceptable to the male mind, in Englishwomen they aroused a boundless indignation. To those who thought seriously about the matter it seemed that even the little foothold already gained—the social and intellectual advances achieved by the Blue-Stockings, by the independent outlook of Mary Astell and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, by the scholarship of an Elizabeth Elstob or an Elizabeth Carter, was likely again to be withdrawn. Here was a man who had cast a spell over the foremost thinkers of Europe, proclaiming with specious reasoning the old tyrannies and the old contempt, and insisting that the birthright of women was inferiority of intellect and pettiness of soul. The challenge was taken up with vigour, and its echoes are to be heard in many directions. There was indeed one interesting exception: Mrs. Barbauld, characteristically, was attracted by Rousseau's picture of Sophie drinking in wisdom from husband and parents; a method to which her own faith was pinned.[2] Hannah More's attack was made, as one might anticipate, on high moral grounds: she dreaded the effect of Rousseau's writings on 'ardent and enthusiastic youth' because 'he habitually gave to vice so natural an air of virtue'.[3] The

[1] *The History of Sandford and Merton*, by Thomas Day, Esq. (11th edition, 1802), pp. 230–2.

[2] *Memoir*, p. xvii.

[3] *Strictures*, p. 318.

most interesting critics of Rousseau were, however, two women of a more 'advanced' type and greater independence of mind.

The coming into intellectual prominence of the middle-classes, as the eighteenth century drew on, is specially worthy of notice in the case of women. The Bas Bleu, with outstanding exceptions, were not by inheritance great ladies like those prominent at Elizabeth's court or during the seventeenth century. They were not, as a rule, the wives or daughters of country squires like the serious women of Anne's reign. They were children of the parsonage or the manse, like Mrs. Carter, Mrs. Barbauld, or Hannah More; their families had been successful in trade like that of Mary Wollstonecraft, or were doctors or lawyers; it was not by prerogative of birth or of wealth that they made their way: firmness of character and outstanding talent, in spite of their disabling sex, had sufficed to impress a section of society which valued wit and sprightliness above rank and worldly possessions, or at any rate thought less of wealth if it was unaccompanied by 'parts'. The more able of these women, with much mental conflict, were now beginning to acquire a wider outlook; to visualize the place of women not merely in the home, but in human society; they pondered over the causes of feminine inadequacy, and they drew conclusions from experience within their own knowledge. The participators in this movement were at first very few and isolated. The pioneer was Mrs. Catharine Macaulay, who came of a race of landowners in a county notoriously conservative in feminist questions, the Sawbridges of Ollantigh in East Kent.

Mrs. Macaulay made a great though temporary reputation as a historian; her writings were spoiled for any permanent value by their partisan character; her *History of England* from James I to George I[1] was unguardedly republican in spirit and attacked the Stuarts with great bitterness; it appeared in eight successive volumes between

[1] *The History of England from the Accession of James I to that of the Brunswick Line.*

1763 and 1783 and Mrs. Chapone may well have had it in mind when she complained of the difficulty of procuring history books for girls which were free of party bias.

Mrs. Macaulay's theories are contained in the *Letters on Education, with Observations on Religious and Metaphysical Subjects*, which she published in 1790, after her second marriage to William Graham.[1] Her favourite text was the degrading difference in the cultivation of the intellect as between men and women, which had prevailed for centuries in all European communities and deeply affected female happiness and prestige. As befitted the wife of a doctor, she fastened specially on the physical aspect: the result of much contemporary education was actually to induce nervous diseases in women. In a few telling paragraphs for, like Hannah More, she has something of the journalist's facility, she develops her theory. 'How much feebleness of constitution has been acquired by forming a false idea of female excellence, and endeavouring by our art to bring Nature to the ply of our imagination. Our sons are suffered to enjoy with freedom that time which is not devoted to study, and may follow, unmolested the strong impulses which Nature has wisely given . . . but if, before her natural vivacity is entirely subdued by habit, little Miss is inclined to show her locomotive tricks in a manner not entirely agreeable to custom, she is reproved with a sharpness which gives her a consciousness of having highly transgressed the laws of decorum . . . every vigorous exertion is suppressed, mind and body yield to the tyranny of error and Nature is charged with all those imperfections[2] . . . which we alone owe to the blunders of art. . . .'

The remedy is an enlightened system of co-education: 'Confine not the education of your daughters to what is regarded as the ornamental parts, nor deny the graces to your sons. . . . Let your children be brought up together, let their sports and studies be the same . . . the wisdom of your daughters will preserve them from the bane of coquetry. . . . Your sons will look for something more solid in women than a mere outside. . . .'[3]

[1] He was brother of James Graham, the notorious quack-doctor, and many years younger than his spouse, a fact which aroused much ill-natured comment.

[2] *Letters on Education, with observations on Religious and Metaphysical Subjects*, by Catharine Macaulay Graham (1790), p. 46.

[3] *Letters*, loc. cit., p. 50.

The little taper which Mrs. Macaulay had set burning was caught up into abler hands, and her vision crowned by the loyal admiration of a younger writer: Mary Wollstonecraft classed her among an astonishing galaxy of women who had derived courage and resolution from a masculine education, with Sappho, Eloïsa, and the Empress of Russia; while with generous warmth she deplored the lack of that recognition which such great abilities deserved.[1]

Mary Wollstonecraft's qualifications to be the leader of a new crusade set her in many respects apart from any of the women we have studied hitherto. With them learning was, in a sense, a luxury; it gratified an innate craving for mental activity. They were repaid for ignorant cavilling and the sneers of their contemporaries, as they freely acknowledged, by that peace of mind which comes from freedom to honour one's birthright. Those of any intellectual distinction who ventured, under the shield of anonymity, upon the writer's career, tacitly accepted, with whatever feelings of rebellious resentment, the inferior position allotted to them by reason of their sex. Mary Wollstonecraft was, in her sphere, 'a prophet and an evangelist'. The child of her age she had taken heed to the voices which on all sides loudly proclaimed the new-old theory that man is born to be free. With the readiness of an acute mind she turned in the first instance to apply the doctrine to her own immediate circumstances. There, in the family of a spendthrift drunkard, she saw the vaunted 'freedom' of the one sex employed to deprive the other sex of the elements of comfort and joy; she realized poignantly that the misery was accentuated by the unquestioning submissiveness of the victims, by the intellectual and domestic degradation of women like her mother, her sisters, even herself. Mrs. Wollstonecraft was terrorized and subjected to gross ill-usage by her husband's insane temper; the daughters were un-

[1] *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, by Mary Wollstonecraft, with an introduction by E. R. Pennell, pp. 102, 143.

qualified in any direction to lift from themselves a heritage of lifelong poverty; the sons were without self-respect, idle, thoughtless, prepared at any moment to demand the means of support from sisters they should rather have befriended. Mary's nearest friend, Fanny Blood, whom she loved with the ardour of a romantic nature, was, as regarded her domestic surroundings, in no better plight than herself. At nineteen Mary went out into the world, already disillusioned, to seek her fortune: each page in her life-story seemed to open on some fresh presentation of the same haunting problem. If humanity were indeed born to freedom of soul, how came it that one half humanity was degraded by an intolerable slavishness, whether it were to men's unworthy impulses, to custom with its train of insincerities, or to their own ignorance: how came it that nearly every woman accepted the position uncomplainingly, sullenly, worst of all, unaware of any better fate?

Mary became, at the outset of her adventures, companion to a Mrs. Dawson, the widow of a rich tradesman, a woman of eccentric temper who had worn out a long series of attendants.[1] A passage in her earliest book, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, reflects clearly enough the experience of a proud woman in this 'humiliating' mode of life; 'to be an humble companion to some rich old cousin, or . . . to live with strangers who are so intolerably tyrannical that none of their own relations can bear to live with them . . . it is impossible, to enumerate the many hours of anguish such a person must spend'.[2] The next yoke to which she bowed her proud head was that of a teacher, for which she had little more inclination: 'a teacher at a school', she writes, 'is only a kind of upper servant, who has more work than the menial ones.'

Her next adventure was still in the field of education: for about a year she became governess in the family of

[1] William Godwin, *Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1798), p. 20.

[2] *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters, with Reflections on Female Conduct in the most important Duties of Life*, by Mary Wollstonecraft (1787), p. 69.

Lady Kingsborough, an Irishwoman of rank who moved in the polite circles of Mitchelstown. Mary Wollstonecraft's first glimpse into fashionable society only added fuel to the smouldering flame. Women, she now perceived, were not alone despised and ignorant, but, when given the opportunity of easy circumstance, they showed themselves vain, light, and contemptible. Lady Kingsborough is the 'fine lady' of the *Vindication*, in whom 'the wife, mother, and human creature were all swallowed up by the factitious character which an improper education and the selfish vanity of beauty had produced', who was 'quite feminine according to the masculine acceptation of the word'. The clever governess, however much she despised her calling, had the faculty of gaining her pupils' affection. The eldest girl became so fond of her that Lady Kingsborough's jealousy was aroused and once more Mary was obliged to face the world, determined now to follow her bent and devote herself to literature. She found employment chiefly in translating foreign books for an enterprising Fleet Street publisher, Mr. Johnson, and lived and worked in shabby lodgings in Blackfriars; there she won the friendship of men of letters like Talleyrand, and entered a coterie which could recognize her many gifts even if the members found her at times almost too forcible and too clever for a woman.

In 1792 her name, already known to literary circles in England, suddenly acquired European notoriety by the publication of the *Vindication of the Rights of Women*: the harvest of her youthful experience was reaped. But although the fact that the *Vindication* was written in the heart's blood gives it an interest apart, it is in many ways a valuable document for the story of women's education; it marks brilliantly the close of a prolonged age of gloom, and points forward to a happier future, although many years had yet to pass before its star broke through prevailing shadows. What, then, was the new angle from which Mary Wollstonecraft viewed the problems of womanhood? She seemed to realize in the full light of

day what others had skirted round, groped after, but never so forcibly expressed. The root of all the trouble was a false conception of women's relation to their environment; in the minds of men, of their friends as well as their foes—in their own minds even—they were 'insulated'; their place in human society was determined by right only of certain functions; outside of these their existence was meaningless, aimless, a weary round of days to be shuffled through into kindly oblivion. Women were the 'fair defects', the 'beautiful flaws' of nature's craftsmanship, the 'artificial graces', the 'afterthoughts' of creation, maladjusted in the result to the Creator's world-scheme; phrases such as these constantly recur.[1] Hence the one sex was always the subject of mental reservation and apology on the part of the other, of those fortunate beings who were made on a more successful pattern and by right divine reigned as kings. This 'separate interest' of women brought about a fatal conflict within society, which undermined morality and divided mankind.

Around these fundamental ideas Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication* is thrown together as though by hands that quiver with intense feeling and sometimes falter over their task.

Godwin declared the book had been written in six weeks. It bears throughout the marks of haste; it is careless and unstudied, without system or logical sequence. The style is turgid and bombastic; 'to the present generation', writes one of the author's biographers, 'her flowers of rhetoric are offensive—her exhortations to the Deity, her foolish flights of fancy, still more unbearable'. Yet a pruning in calmer moments might have lessened that passionate sincerity which makes its way gratefully among the purlieus of artificial sentiment in which the student of eighteenth-century womanhood must perforce spend long hours. The touchstone of sincerity had indeed lain too long in some forgotten corner: Mary Wollstonecraft

[1] Cf. *Vindication*, pp. 40, 53, 69, &c.

applied its acid properties very freely to the education of girls in her day. She discovered little that was new, but restated the case so vigorously that her presentation could hardly fail to be beneficial in the long run. She quarrelled relentlessly with popular books like Dr. Gregory's *Legacy* and Dr. Fordyce's *Sermons*. The former she arraigned for his affected style, his 'pitiful worldly shifts and sleight-of-hand tricks'. If a woman possessed robust health why should she 'feign a sickly delicacy'? if she loved her husband why conceal her true feelings lest he should cease to pursue her with a lover's ardour?[1] In the same way she dealt with the 'mellifluous precepts' of Dr. Fordyce, whose *Sermons* for so long had made a part of every young woman's library and even of schoolgirls' reading. These sermons were perhaps the most sickly product of Rousseau's school of thought, and Mary's condemnation was endorsed by many people of good sense. One example alone, quoted by her, may be disinterred from well-merited oblivion: 'Never perhaps', the preacher declared, 'does a fine woman strike more deeply than when, composed into pious recollection, . . . the beauties of holiness seem to radiate about her and the bystanders are almost induced to fancy her already worshipping among her kindred angels.'[2] 'Idle empty words', are the critic's comment. 'What can such delusive flattery lead to but vanity and folly . . . should a grave preacher interlard his discourse with such fooleries?'

The immediate response to the *Vindication* was a bitter attack on the author, the 'Amazonian heroine' who, in the words of one indignant writer, so 'boldly summoned the most redoubtable male champions to meet her in single combat, in order to assert or relinquish the superiority they claim'.[3] She had indeed thrown down the gauntlet; it remained to be seen whether any one, especially any one of the 'ladies' she vindicated, had courage to take it up.

[1] *Vindication*, prefatory note, p. xx.

[2] Ib., p. 128.

[3] *Letters on the Intellectual and Moral Character of Women, addressed to the Ladies of Great Britain* (1807), p. 101.

5. *The Attack on Accomplishments*

If Mary Wollstonecraft, and to a lesser degree Mrs. Macaulay, examined the subject of girls' education on broad grounds of social expediency, two women writers at the end of the century approached it at closer quarters, highly discontented with the established system of 'ornamental accomplishments'. The *Vindication* is fervent, almost prophetic; the *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, published in 1799, is pervaded by the cold light of every day, sensible to the verge of commonplace, and moralizing to the point of exasperation.

Hannah More was well advanced in middle age when her book appeared, having been born in 1745. She had now for many years deserted the literary circles which she once charmed with her capacity for hero-worship and her clever *vers-de-société*. She had been converted to a stern methodistic view of life, and become absorbed in philanthropic labours of the most unselfish kind. In her literary activities she combined, in a unique fashion, the rigidity of the stern moralist with the outlook of the journalist; the avowed aim of all her writings was 'to render piety fashionable and popular', and to a large extent she was successful: Bishop Porteous declared that two million copies of her religious tracts were sold in the first year of publication. Hannah More took herself, as indeed her contemporaries took her, with profound seriousness. The *Strictures* is a full-dress pronouncement from the judgement seat. For modern readers, if the tedious style can be overlooked, its interest lies in certain passages of self-revelation, and in others which survey in historic sequence the phases through which female education had passed in Hannah's lifetime, and the point at which it now stood. The Treatise opens with a 'trumpet-call' summoning Englishwomen to come forward and contribute in a worthy degree to the saving of their country: without loss of dignity, refinement, or delicacy, it is within their power to 'raise the depressed tone of public morals and

awaken the drowsy spirit of religious principle'.[1] The note of caution here already perceptible, suddenly deepens and finally overwhelms the more vigorous blast. Hannah is frightened at her own temerity: has she or has she not overstepped discretion in her noisy summons? She dislikes female warriors and politicians:

'I hardly know which of the two is the most disgusting and unnatural character: propriety is to a woman what the great Roman critic says action is to an orator; it is the first, the second, the third requisite; a woman may be knowing, active, witty and amusing, but without propriety she cannot be amiable.'

The 'trumpet-call' thus dies away into the remote distance. The watchword of the *Strictures*—propriety, caution, discretion—is pronounced and no startling advance can any longer be expected from one who is so obviously the child of her generation. Yet much of that from which she could not disentangle her middle-aged instincts Hannah neither admired nor approved. If her attack is now on a less heroic plane it is still pressed forward with vigour. Her account of those earlier faulty conditions which she and her contemporaries believed themselves to have surmounted, is amusingly summarized in a *Poetical Review of the Strictures by 'Sappho Search'*, usually an unsparing critic of Hannah's position:

> With humour she paints the quick shiftings of fashion;
> A short while ago it was all soft compassion,
> Sentiment, sympathy, feeling, emotion,
> While damsels of principle scarce had a notion;
> 'Twas all mere minauderie, prim affectation,
> To amble and lisp and nick-name God's creation,
> With a touch of her wand, fashion shifted the scene,
> The hoyden, the huntress, the bold heroine,
> Like ghosts thro' a trap-door, sprung up on the stage,
> And masculine manners became all the rage.[2]

Hannah's own generation sought a happy mean among these vagaries of fashion: they desired to train up 'neither

[1] *Strictures*, p. 313.

[2] *A Poetical Review of Mrs. Hannah More's Strictures on Female Education in a Series of Anapestic Epistles by Sappho Search* (1800), p. 43.

Amazons nor Circassians' but to shape Christian lives, 'to educate not only rational but accountable beings'.

From this point it is of interest to treat Hannah More's views in relation to those expressed by Maria Edgeworth in the chapter on 'Female Accomplishments, Masters and Governesses', included in her *Practical Education*, published in 1798, and in the earlier *Letters to Literary Ladies*. Miss Edgeworth's writing is, of the two, by far the more terse and direct; her logic is relentless, her outlook unsparingly direct. As a younger woman she had shaken off, or indeed had never suffered, the hampering sense of propriety which turned the edge of Hannah More's most telling observations. She wrote in conjunction with her father, and her views were presumably tempered by the male mind. Yet on the general question both writers were impressed by the change of attitude towards the study of 'ornamental subjects' since the days when Addison thought the great end of a lady's learning to dance was only that 'she might know how to sit still gracefully'. An almost professional thoroughness was now demanded. A girl nowadays acquired not one but a succession of instructors in dancing; nowadays she was taught music not by one master but a whole orchestra of masters. 'A delighted mother', wrote Hannah with just indignation and some humour, 'has been heard to declare that her girls had not a moment's interval to look into a book', until she devised the plan of reading aloud to them herself for half an hour while they were drawing, so as to lose no time.

Miss Edgeworth averred that this 'speeding-up' had taken place under pressure of circumstance:

> 'Every young lady (and every young woman is now a lady), has some pretensions to accomplishments. She draws a little: or she plays a little; or she speaks French a little . . . Stop at any good inn on the London road and you will probably find that the landlady's daughter can shew you some of her own framed drawings, can play a tune upon her spinnet, or support a dialogue in French of a reasonable length in the customary questions and answers. Now it is the practice in high life to undervalue and avoid as much as

possible everything which descends to the inferior classes of society . . . accomplishments have lost much of that value which they acquired from opinion since they have become common.'[1]

Accordingly the upper classes were reduced to the necessity of establishing another kind of monopoly, a monopoly in expensive masters. Yet since everything can be bought for money, even into this last intrenchment of privilege, they were being pursued by the *nouveaux riches* who had made money in trade. The day was drawing near (let the votaries of fashion beware of it!) when accomplishments would become not only vulgar but obsolete.

'Our great grandmothers distinguished themselves by truly substantial tent-work, chairs and carpets, by needlework-pictures of Solomon and the queen of Sheba. These were admirable in their day but their day is over; and these useful, ingenious and laborious specimens of female talents are consigned to the garret . . . the taste for tapestry and embroidery are thus past; the long labours of the loom have ceased. Cloth-work, crape-work, chenille-work, ribbon-work, wafer-work . . . have all passed away in our own memory; yet these conferred much evanescent fame. . . . A taste for drawing or music cannot be classed with any of these trifling performances; but there are many faded drawings of the present generations which cannot stand in competition with the glowing . . . colours . . . of former times; and many of the hours spent at a *stammering* harpsichord might surely, with full as much domestic advantage, have been devoted to the embellishment of chairs and carpets.'[2]

And after all what is the true educational value of accomplishments? Education is a preparation for life, yet how soon after young women are 'settled' does their fondness for drawing and music decline? The question is too seldom asked, have these girls, or have they not, any natural taste for the subjects on which they spend precious years of youth?

A computation had been made, Mrs. More alleged, that a girl who began music at six years old and practised four

[1] *Practical Education*, by Maria Edgeworth and Richard Lovell Edgeworth (1798), vol. ii, p. 529.

[2] Ib., vol. ii, chap. xx, p. 530.

hours daily, omitting Sundays, all the year round (except on thirteen days when she was travelling), until the age of eighteen, gave no less than 14,400 hours of life to playing scales. The pith of the story lay in the fact that eventually she married a man who disliked music; but Hannah discovered an even greater absurdity: she was the victim of a system which, regardless of aptitude, 'erected the whole sex into artists'.[1] If then it had no true justification on educational grounds, whence arose the 'frenzy of accomplishments'? It was but one manifestation of the craving for admiration which possessed parents for their girls and girls all too readily for themselves.

Maria Edgeworth opened her chapter on 'Female Accomplishments' with a telling dialogue on this same point:

> 'Would not you,' she addressed herself to a fashionable lady, 'as a good mother, consent to have your daughter turned into an automaton for eight hours in every day for fifteen years, for the promise of hearing her, at the end of that time, pronounced the first private performer at the most fashionable and most crowded concert in London?'
>
> . . . 'For *one* concert,' says the hesitating mother; ' I think it would be too high a price. Yet I would give anything to have my daughter play better than any one in England. What a distinction! She might get into the first circles in London! She would want neither beauty nor fortune to recommend her! She would be a match for any man who has any taste for music. . . .'[2]

The glorification of the prodigy, exemplified in much contemporary literature, now pointed to a laurel crown within the grasp of any girl who was sufficiently industrious in scale-practice and the copying of flower-pieces. Fanny Burney might shudder and even weep at the idea of it becoming known she had written a masterpiece, but she admired without stint, and all her friends admired, the little misses who drummed the harpsichord before crowded drawing-rooms, the Miss Birches who chanted snatches of French opera, or skipped round the room, practising

[1] *Strictures*, p. 325, foot-notes. [2] *Practical Education*, chap. xx, p. 521.

the newest dance-steps, and flinging themselves into the laps of adoring ladies with 'dying languors' and extravagant compliments.[1] In such a *milieu* it was the interest of the 'hired teacher' to bring in 'an immediate revenue of praise and profit', flattery completed what blind ambition had begun, and the girl who received the worst kind of training made the best figure in a world of perverted standards.[2]

Hannah More and Maria Edgeworth wrote strongly on a subject about which they felt strongly. It is fair to remember that they had their critics; to one of these, 'Sappho Search', reference has already been made. This lady regarded puritan Hannah with sarcastic amusement; pilloried her exaggeration of the 'natural corruption' of human nature, and alleged cruelly,

> 'Tis porridge, not spirit, in which Hannah deals.'

She even hinted that the attack on accomplishments was inspired by the author's lack of musical sensibility and unfitness for the ballroom:

> In spite of each thing she may write or may say,
> Young damsels to music will foot it away.
> King David lov'd music and dancing of yore;
> And such a man *still* might lead out Hannah More.[3]

Between Sappho and Hannah lay, somewhere, the truth. The education of girls had strayed away from the true path; somehow the straight way must be rediscovered. On the constructive side neither Mrs. More nor Miss Edgeworth had any comprehensive scheme to offer, though both made characteristic suggestions. The *View of the Principles and Conduct prevalent among Women of Rank and Fortune* (a class which Hannah More cannot have known intimately, but for whose admonition she held herself peculiarly fitted) supplements the *Strictures*,

[1] *Diary*, vol. i, p. 222.

[2] *Strictures*, p. 326. The evil effects produced in boarding-schools and among girls not well enough off to lead idle lives, who enlarged the vicious circle by becoming inefficient teachers, has already been described.

[3] *Poetical Reviews*, p. 45.

and shows that the first aim of the reformer must be to eliminate display and to cultivate girls' understandings for practical ends. The passage which summarizes the whole position, if grandiloquent, is not without dignity and an elevated good sense. It marks a great advance upon Mrs. Chapone and her school, not least by insistence on sincerity and self-control as the key-notes of training. It recommends:

'A predominance of those more sober studies, which not having display for their object, may make [the pupil] wise without vanity, happy without witnesses, and content, without panegyrists. . . . She should pursue every kind of study which will teach her to elicit truth; . . . will give precision to her ideas ; will make an exact mind. She should cultivate every study which . . . will bring the imagination under dominion; will lead her to think, to compare, to combine and methodise; which will confer such a power of discrimination that her judgment shall learn . . . to prefer not what is striking or bright or new, but what is just. That kind of knowledge which is rather fitted for home consumption than foreign exportation is peculiarly adapted to women. . . .'[1]

The details of her proposed courses of learning Hannah More borrowed chiefly from Rollin, going back in this respect to the fashions of her own youth.

Miss Edgeworth, for her part, thought that intellectual degradation was bound to result if 'mechanical talents' were ranked above exercise of the mental powers.

'Praise children', she wrote, 'for patience, for perseverance, for industry, encourage them to reason and to invent upon all subjects and you may direct their attention afterwards as you think proper. But if you applaud children merely for drawing a flower neatly or copying a landscape, without exciting their ambition to anything higher you will never create superior talents or a superior character.'[2]

Education was to her the drawing out of innate powers, not a dressing up in gay feathers with a view of attracting

[1] *A View of the Principles and Conduct prevalent among Women of Rank and Fortune* (follows *Strictures* at chap. xiv), *Works*, vol. i, p. 363.

[2] *Practical Education*, p. 540.

the attention of thoughtless people, a definition which too long had obsessed the controllers of girls' studies. Like Fénelon, she realized the immense importance of the teacher's office. One great blemish in the system of accomplishments, in its later phases, was the pernicious habit of 'teaching things separately', unrelated to one another; subjects were subdivided among a multiplicity of masters without any realization of the bewildering effect on the child's mind. The evil might be overcome by the appointment, in control of the curriculum, of 'some person of enlarged and philosophic mind', that is to say, a good governess. Such a governess would not be chosen for being 'a mistress of arts, a performer in music, a paintress, a linguist, or a poetess', but for steadiness, freedom from prejudice, and 'that species of integrity which will justify a parent in trusting a child to her care'.[1]

She made her suggestion the more hopefully because, in her experience (unlike that of Mary Wollstonecraft), the treatment of the governess in well-bred families had at last begun to show a marked improvement; she was re-regarded no longer as an upper servant, or 'an intermediate being between a servant and a gentlewoman', but as the friend and companion of the family. The pendulum even showed signs of swinging too far in the other direction; there was manifest an anxiety to amuse the governess at the expense of regularity in the children's hours of instruction. It still remained, however, to encourage a race of preceptresses worthy of performing the national service of education, by making their scale of remuneration far more liberal. High office in the Church was not infrequently the reward of the tutors of noblemen's sons. No such provision could be expected for their daughters' governesses. But at least an adequate salary, a salary perhaps of £300 a year for three years, might come to be regarded as suitable compensation, enabling a young woman to put by for her old age, and encouraging her to improve her professional efficiency. Miss Edgeworth's

[1] *Practical Education*, p. 545.

suggestion must have fallen as a bomb-shell in many families where the old starvation wage, the old contemptuous attitude, was still upheld. As a matter of history it unfortunately remained a counsel of perfection for many a year to come.

6. *Ladies' Libraries and School Books for Girls*

Something must be said to complete for the later years our account of the books provided for women's reading. Such information as we possess about country-house libraries in Tudor times, drawn chiefly from account books and inventories, shows that the tastes of the lady of the house were sometimes consulted. For instance, Sir William More of Loseley in 1556 records the purchase for his 'owne closette' of numerous books in English, French, Italian, and Latin, together with some maps and 'a slate to wryte', and amongst others

The Instruccion of a woman	xij*d.*
The Comentary of Ladys	j*d.*
The apparell of women	j*d.*
The defense of good women	ij*d.*
A boke of women	j*d.*

In 'my wyf's closet' were no books except a medical work, and some books of devotion, namely:

the pomeander of prayers	iij*d.*
iij other bokes of prayers	

besides

iij workyng baskets
A mold for pastree

and a number of medicine glasses.[1]

Dr. George Hickes added an interesting postscript to his translation of Fénelon's *Education of a Daughter*, commenting on the 'difficulty in the chusing good Books to busie ones self withal in Solitude', which he thought not less than the difficulty of choosing 'good Friends to entertain one in Conversation'. His list was largely composed

[1] *Archaeologia*, xxxvi, p. 290.

of devotional books, such as *The Whole Duty of Man*, *The Ladies' Calling*, Nelson's *Companion for the Festivals of the Church of England*, the *Meditations and Soliloquies of St. Austin*, and Susannah Hopton's *Devotions in the Ancient Way of Offices*, which he had himself edited and greatly appreciated. He placed Mary Astell's *Serious Proposal* and her *Christian Religion*, on his pupil's shelf and added: 'especially I would have the Parable of the Pilgrim given to her, the Pleasantness and Easiness of which will incite her to read forward and will much help to inspire a lovely Idea of Religion.' For lighter reading the best Histories and Memoirs were permitted, and 'for the Study of Morality, Seneca's Morals, done by Sir R. L. S is almost the only piece besides the incomparable Essays of Mr. Collier'. Lastly he allowed the model pupil to enjoy the *Ladies' New Year's Gift*, with the caution that 'One Book that is very good may to some serve instead of a Library'.[1]

The provision of suitable books for girls and women, which neither would over-excite the emotions nor over-task minds inapt for serious study, was a subject to which successive eighteenth-century writers gave particular attention. It was raised by Steele in an early number of the *Tatler*, where he suggested that a first step towards better education for women might be the formation of a Female Library, to consist of authors who could be 'diverting without impropriety'.[2]

The subject was too interesting to numerous readers to be allowed to drop; but few numbers of the *Spectator* had reached the tea-tables when the fashionable world was excited by Addison's famous description of his visit to Leonora's Library: 'The very sound of a lady's library', gave him 'a great curiosity to see it.'[3] Leonora was a connoisseur in knick-knacks as well as in polite literature, and her books were subsidiary to great jars, 'scaramouches,

[1] Hickes, loc. cit., p. 285 et seq.
[2] R. Lyman, *British Essayists* (1827), *Tatler*, vol. ii (1709–10), No. 246.
[3] *Spectator* (ed. 1819), vol. i, No. 37.

lions, monsters, mandarines', and other china-ware which made it uncertain whether one were in a grotto or a library. The books themselves, eked out with volumes of the classic authors 'all in wood', and a set of Elzevirs by the same hand, formed a small but choice array, and were such as might give literary distinction without suspicion of preciosity.

What echoes of the past sound out from the names which Addison set down between jest and earnest; how they recall the undying love of romance, the hero-worship of Sir Philip Sidney, the unwearied pursuit of social charm, the childish blundering at hard words, the intermittent piety, the leaning to scandalous relations such as Mrs. Manly's, the serious women-disciples of Mr. Locke, the time-honoured sneers of the worldly-wise at feminine shortcomings, the inevitable goal of all youth and beauty. No other list can have an equal flavour, yet there are many others deserving of comment.

The immortal Leonora, so full of romantic absurdities 'so oddly improved by learning', had, it is said, her original in Miss Shepheard, afterwards Mrs. Perry; emulous of her distinction, numerous correspondents hastened to inform Addison of their own literary preferences.[1]

Last of all, Parthenia, a sister of Leonora, entered the lists to beg for advice in choosing books,[2] and her letter was possibly the immediate occasion of the *Ladies' Library*, 'written by a Lady' and published in 1714.[3]

This very popular work was a 'Library' only in the sense that it consisted of passages from other people's books, excerpts 'collected out of the several Writings of our greatest Divines'; beyond this intimation in the preface no hint is given from whence the borrowings are derived, and they are neatly and invisibly dove-tailed together.[4] Here was the first of those numerous assemblies

[1] Cf. *Spectator*, vol. ii, No. 92. [2] Ib., No. 140.

[3] Steele's Introduction declared that it came into his hands—rather into his head—upon the frequent mention of such a collection in the *Spectator*.

[4] For Steele's debt to Fénelon's *Education of a Daughter* see *supra*, p. 365.

of elegant extracts which supplied, for two or three generations, a staple of education in literary taste, and one that offered a compendium of moral instruction highly characteristic of its age. No educational work was now complete that did not give advice upon reading and the choice of books and Ladies' Libraries of different types were multiplied.[1] Even the novelists put in a plea for solid reading. Richardson knew better than to leave Clarissa without mental sustenance in her cruel captivity, and by a master-stroke made Lovelace provide for his victim a high-toned library purchased at second-hand, which helped to lead her astray about the true character of her evil associates. She might find distraction for an aching heart in devotional literature, such as South's *Sermons*, or in books of a lighter turn, *Telemachus*, in French or English, the plays of Steele, Rowe, Colley Cibber, and Shakespeare, Dryden's *Miscellanies*, the *Tatlers*, *Spectators*, and *Guardians*, and the works of Pope, Addison, and Swift.[2]

Moving on through the mid-century, we find that the letter-writers devote many pages to impressing on girl-pupils the pleasure and profit of reading in order to fill the 'empty spaces of life'; the books they recommend are varied enough to form a substantial collection.

Lady Pennington, for example, supplied a list of entertaining books to be read by her daughter, in the afternoon or evening, after the morning had been devoted to more organized improvement of the mind: her selection, inspired by Rollin, differs from that of Leonora, half a century earlier, in the greater preponderance of serious books, especially histories and poetry, and the number of translations from the classics, not now 'in wood'; with the exception of *Telemachus* and *The Vicar of Wakefield*

[1] Two Broadsheets entitled, *The Ladies' Fourth Library*, and *The Ladies' Library*, containing all their plays, poems, romances, farces, &c., by the Female Authors of St. Peter's Parish, were issued in Dublin about 1722, with a key to all the names appended; they were followed by a 'Poem being an Answer to the Ladies' Libraries in general'.

[2] *Clarissa Harlowe* (ed. 1810), vol. iii, p. 321.

romances find no place, and are indeed pronounced to be seldom worth reading; 'Some of them perhaps do contain a few good morals, but they are not worth the finding where so much rubbish is intermixed'.[1]

A far more extensive Lady's Library belonged, according to Vicesimus Knox, to an acquaintance of his, a clergyman's daughter, who had tasted 'the Insensibility of the Men to the Charms of a Female Mind cultivated with polite and solid Literature'. Unlike Miss Burney, she valued herself highly upon the 'noble privilege' of reading the Greek Testament and Homer in the original, and found in the French and Italian masterpieces and the poets from Shakespeare to Pope compensation for constrained civility when she went into society, and for unfriendly hints that awkwardness must be excused in a learned lady.[2]

Hannah More felt that a girl's intellectual stamina needed bracing: such strong meat as Watts's or Duncan's *Logic*, Locke *On the Human Understanding*, and Bishop Butler's *Analogy*, should in her opinion replace on the bookshelves 'much English sentiment, French philosophy, Italian love-songs, and fantastic German imagery', always provided there was at hand an able friend and counsellor.[3]

The Ladies' Libraries were chiefly intended for the leisured woman, or the girl leaving school who had literary inclinations. Undoubtedly the efforts of the compilers were rewarded; thanks largely to them and to the *Spectator*, the taste for literature of a higher quality became more widespread. The diarists provide us with evidence enough that ladies of rank, Queen Charlotte herself and her daughters, as we have seen, read many serious even heavy books, and discussed them with their friends. Nor was the improvement confined to the wealthy. Hannah More wrote improving stories for 'Persons of the

[1] Pennington, loc. cit., p. 66.

[2] *Essays, Moral and Literary*, by Vicesimus Knox, vol. iii, No. cxlii, p. 114 (ed. 1823).

[3] *Strictures*, p. 344.

Middle Rank', which were widely popular, and thought it incumbent on women of good position, now that poor women had been taught to read, to provide them with moral and religious books. Romance-reading, if it had diminished among the educated classes, flourished among working-women. Milliners and mantua-makers appointed one of their number to read stories aloud while they sat at work, and novels were 'greedily read' in the hospital-ward.[1] All this desultory reading was no doubt a great improvement on the blank ignorance of earlier generations. At the same time, as it lacked a background, it was not, in any sense, organized education.

The closing years of the century saw an extensive provision of school-books compiled very largely by women who had opportunities of realizing the need. Mrs. Trimmer's manuals for religious training, especially in the Charity Schools, are elsewhere described: her *Fabulous Histories*, better known to modern readers as *The Robins*, was a classic for many nursery generations. Mrs. Barbauld's *Early Lessons for Children*, written for the instruction of her young nephew, 'originated a reformation in the instruction of the young'; her *Hymns in Prose* and the *Evenings at Home* which she composed with her brother's collaboration delighted innumerable child-readers. All these, with Miss Edgeworth's *Parents' Assistant*, her *Practical Education*, her *Moral and Popular Tales* for elder children, written in a style as lucid and incisive as their contents, were marked by sound sense and practical usefulness, are poles asunder from such lesson-books as the *Misses' Magazine*, with which but a few years before teachers had perforce to be content.

The practice of instructing girls in the elements of science and sociology, which was steadily coming into use, was assisted by such books as Mrs. Marcet's *Conversations on Chemistry*, on *Political Economy*, on *Natural Philosophy*, and on *Vegetable Physiology*. It is said that

[1] *Strictures*, p. 345.

before she died, in her ninetieth year, Mrs. Marcet's works had become 'the text-books in many hundreds of schools',[1] and her pupils both in the old world and the new were numbered by thousands.

Inevitably these writers had their imitators, not all of an equal genius. Hannah More, writing in 1799, sounded a note of warning about the 'profusion of little amusing sentimental books with which the youthful library o'erflows'. There was a real danger that the pupils might be 'made superficial through the very facility of acquirement'. 'We cannot cheat children into learning', she wrote, with her usual uncompromising honesty, 'according to the conciliating smoothness of the modern creed and the selfish indolence of the modern habit.'[2]

Her criticisms were so far justified in the case of the excellent writers already named that they were too prone to dress up educational intention in the garb of a story. The poet Rogers remarked on the strange way in which women-authors persisted in being didactic; 'Miss Martineau teaches political economy by tales; Mrs. Marcet sets up for a general instructor, not only in her dialogues but in fairy stories, and Miss Edgeworth is a schoolmistress in her tales'.[3] The reason was not far to seek. In this harmless fashion they were keeping up a tradition of their girlhood which exalted the virtue of indirect instruction. They are readily forgiven when we come to consider the type of lesson-book to which the closing century gave birth. The 'swarms of Abridgments, Beauties and Compendiums', which constituted in the case of the grown up girl 'an infallible receipt for making a superficial mind',[4] had their counterpart in the schoolroom, in manuals of universal knowledge and the question-and-answer method of acquiring disconnected facts and detached dates which 'floated in the memory'. Of all books of this kind ever industriously compiled the most successful was the *Historical and Miscellaneous Questions for the use of Young People*,

[1] Jerom Murch, *Mrs. Barbauld and her Contemporaries*, p. 32.
[2] *Strictures*, p. 322. [3] Murch, loc. cit., p. 26. [4] *Strictures*, p. 343.

better known as *Mangnall's Questions*, which was published at Stockport in 1800. The authoress, Richmal Mangnall, was a teacher in Mrs. Wilson's school for girls at Crofton Hall, near Wakefield, of which eventually she became head mistress. Like other famous authors, Miss Mangnall sold the copyright of her greatest work to the publishers, Messrs. Longmans, for a paltry sum, one hundred guineas, receiving only small additional amounts as successive editions followed one another with incredible rapidity; the eleventh was sold out during 1815, and a twelfth issued from the press. Yet even on these terms she made, from this and other writings, a fortune of £130,000. 'What Aristotle was to the schoolmen that Mangnall has been, and it would seem in many parts of the country still is, to governesses,' wrote one of her critics as lately as 1888; and there can be no better evidence of the reign of omniscience in girls' education which supervened upon the reign of accomplishments (or rather came to share the throne) than the wide popularity of such a book: 'To know Mangnall was to know everything.' She had a genius for the posing of questions, not indeed insoluble but requiring industry for their solution. To inquire how far it was worth a girl's painstaking labour to acquaint herself

> What calamities have befallen the ancient Jews?
> What are the Stewards of the Chiltern Hundreds?
> What is the use of common oil? or
> What was Samson's end?[1]

was as little important as it once had been to inquire if she had a taste for music or a capacity for art. Yet such questions form the staple of Miss Mangnall's profitable book, and to their solution the education of English girls was now for many decades to bend its endeavour. The method was not actually new; rather it was the inevitable outcome, the systematization, of the smattering in many kinds which the letter-writers had persistently advocated; it was a short cut to universal knowledge.

[1] *Journal of Education* (1888), p. 329. Article on Richmal Mangnall by J. W.-H. Cf. p. 431.

THE EPILOGUE

A LONG succession of scenes and characters, marshalled before the mind's eye of the attentive reader, has served to provide a historic background for the present condition of women's education. The period which remains for consideration, the century and a quarter between 1800 and our own day, is by comparison the most crowded of all, and the material for composing its history is abundant and accessible. The historian of those years—and many have already attempted the task—has in the first place to account for the sudden forward movement which, when at last it came about, showed no sign of retrogression. The Renaissance impulse towards women's learning had died away in the seventeenth century; the effort of the Blue-Stockings, Mary Wollstonecraft's burning words, Mrs. Trimmer's prayers and tears, effective for the moment, seemed to produce no lasting improvement. The progress of the nineteenth century was phenomenal and unbroken; it gathered up and far exceeded all the dreams of earlier reformers. Yet the opening years in all types of female education were, if possible, even more stagnant and effete than their predecessors. The numerous ineffective middle-class girls' boarding-schools were indeed redeemed, here and there, by one where better standards obtained; but for the majority the words in which Mrs. Sewell described the Friend's School at Tottenham in 1811 are sufficiently typical:

'The method of teaching was the same as at most other schools at that time—just learning lessons and repeating them word for word. We had a few lessons to learn out of school hours. All this, lodged in the memory, was considered as volumes of knowledge for future use. I believe a great deal of it was dead seed.'[1]

Improvement seemed wellnigh unattainable where the position of the teacher was still as humiliating as her attainments were inadequate to her calling.

[1] *Life of Mrs. Sewell*, p. 44.

Elementary education was distinctly in a worse state than it had been in the heyday of the Charity Schools. Even the best of the endowed foundations, such for instance as the Girls' School of Greenwich Hospital, once so efficient, had fallen on evil times. In 1840 the pupils were 'discharged at 14, without any knowledge of domestic duties except sewing, incapable of relieving or assisting their parents'.[1] The position had become immeasurably complicated by the industrial revolution, by the employment of children in factories, and by that greed of gain which hurried boys and girls into industry at seven years old and grudged them a few hours to be spent in acquiring the rudiments of learning. In the pit-towns the girls were indeed as a rule left to their books or to their needles a year or two longer than their brothers.[2] In some Lancashire cloth-towns girl-workers under thirteen came to school as half-timers, alternately morning and afternoon, for three or four hours a day. Their appearance, wrote one of the Inspectors, is 'painfully interesting'.

'Where others are clean in person, neat in dress, and happy in expression, these are dirty and labour-soiled, in ragged and scanty clothes, with heavy eyes and worn faces. Their faces, necks, and hands are deeply stained with the blue of the dye used for the cloth. From the spinning-mills they come covered with the 'flock' . . . the fluff of the yarn, their hair thickly powdered with it . . . tangled as if no comb could ever penetrate it; their thick brown dresses bearing on them plentiful memorials of the scene which they have just left, the mill with its fluff-laden atmosphere and its continual whirl of machinery. They seem to take their places in the school, as if they did not belong to it and had no business there.'[3]

In certain rural areas and country towns, cottage-industries, straw-plaiting and lace-making, carried on at home or in dame schools of the old pattern, kept the girls so constantly employed that the only hope of teaching them was to read aloud while their fingers were ceaselessly

[1] *Minutes of Committee of Council on Education*, 1840–1. Appendix p. 243.
[2] Ib. p. 136.
[3] Ib., 1844, vol. ii, p. 280.

engaged in mechanical tasks.[1] Many agricultural labourers, notably in Norfolk, appeared 'never to have learned anything'. Enclosure and the consolidation of farms had introduced a new race of farmers, men of greater substance, whose farm-houses were no longer the school of the agricultural and domestic servant. The employment of boys and girls upon the land, to watch crows, pick weeds and stones, set swedes, 'drop' wheat and so forth, meant the suspension of all schooling for many months in the year. The neat and orderly conditions in old-fashioned dame schools which, in many areas, well on to the mid-century, were the only educational provision, often stood out in favourable contrast to the dirt and squalor of town-schools, although the amount of instruction they supplied was of no high order. In one such school, not exceptionally low-grade, 'the mistress accounted for the fact that none of the girls learned arithmetic by stating that in her opinion it was unnecessary for them. The writing in the few copybooks exhibited was extremely bad, and yet it had already conferred distinction on the young writers, for, said she, 'As many as writes comes into the first class'.[2]

The historian has thus the task of tracing the development of the present elementary school system for girls from such conditions as those briefly indicated. He will discover the first signs of awakening to the threat which base ignorance offers to national prosperity; an awakening also to the imperative need of a qualified teaching staff. As a result of reports presented to the Council on Education, and of representations by the Poor Law Commissioners on the lack of teachers in pauper schools, in 1835 £10,000 was granted from public funds towards the erection of Normal or Model Schools, under the joint auspices of the National Society and the British and Foreign School Society. This followed a vote of £20,000 for the erection of schoolhouses under the Revenue Act of 1833. Improvements from within came about very

[1] Ib., 1842–3, p. 172.
[2] *Minutes*, 1840–1, Appendix, p. 186 (No. 13).

gradually; in 1845 the prospects in the southern district were considered encouraging; there was a growth of interest in all ranks; parents were now making sacrifices to keep their children at school; the keenness of individual girls was remarkable; the girls, as a rule, remained two or three years longer under instruction than the boys; in the London district arithmetic was now taught to the girls with 'ease, precision, and great practical success'.[1] The British Schools in the north of England were supervised with excellent results and regularly visited by committees of ladies, who encouraged the teachers and helped to introduce a good tone. By 1861 the advance was more decided; a report on the home counties refers to the 'vast amount of interest taken now in manufacturing districts in female education, and especially in the giving of that kind of knowledge which is to make the workman's home more attractive than it has hitherto been'.[2] Henceforward the historian's path is marked out by great educational measures, the Acts of 1870, 1903, 1918. The destiny of the elementary schoolgirl henceforward is inseparable from that of the schoolboy: she is equally the charge of the nation; the capacity, nay the right, of the humblest of her sex to benefit by instruction has for ever passed beyond the regions of debate.

Even more dramatic was the revolutionary course of events in the training of middle- and upper-class women. There are no passages in the whole history of female education better deserving close study than those which led on to changes so long overdue; than the curious interaction of social and philanthropic motive, or the varied character of the protagonists, now a young queen, now a poet, now a reviewer with pen dipped in acid, the starveling governess, the leaders of a new Christian Socialism, the women of genius and of vision.

In the mind of Tennyson the question of 'the housing and education of the poor man before making him our

[1] *Minutes*, 1845, Appendix, p. 151.
[2] *Minutes*, 1861, Appendix, p. 43.

master', was closely bound up with another problem, that of the improved education of women. In the assurance that a great movement of reform could not long be delayed, *The Princess* was published in 1848; with poetic insight it reached at once the heart of the matter—namely, the bearing of reform on the future relation of man and woman—and there shed the light of an ideal co-operation:

> Oh, we will walk this world
> Yoked in all exercise of noble ends.

Such an impulse was needed to sustain a spirit already abroad. It was characteristic of the Englishwoman that her demand for better education became insistent when her conscience had fully awakened to social needs which, in a modern civilization, only a better mental equipment could qualify her to serve. The cry of suffering and of poverty had at all times aroused a response in better-endowed women, especially during the later eighteenth century, when the duty of philanthropy found a place in the boarding-school code; indeed for centuries past, by the study of elementary medicine, women had endeavoured to meet that cry effectively, according to their lights. More, much more, was now required of them. 'Never,' said the reviewer of F. D. Maurice's *Lectures to Ladies*, 'never was there a time at which greater mutual esteem and a more earnest participation in the great duties of humanity prevailed than that which exists between Englishmen and Englishwomen of the present age.' And it is significant that the lectures of which he wrote were delivered to a band of women eager to prepare themselves for voluntary teaching in a feminine counterpart of the College for Working Men.

The influence which one woman in particular exercised, indirectly in the sphere of education no less than directly in her special field of work, must not escape remark. The achievement of Florence Nightingale (it was said by her thoughtful contemporaries) strengthened faith in the readiness with which a man's esteem is bestowed on women

when it is well earned; she gave to women a new confidence in themselves: to men a new belief in women.

Then again there must be borne in mind the poetic justice which linked the origins of the first college for women with, we must say it, the martyrs of the old régime. It is true that signs of greater respect for the woman-teacher had already been noted in some quarters by Miss Edgeworth. A writer in *The Young Lady's Friend*, before 1840, commented forcibly upon the 'instinctive homage' due to 'mental culture and refined manners'. 'Can there,' she asked, with an emphasis that suggested intimate knowledge of the conditions she deplored, 'can there be any sense in the half-educated daughter of a lawyer or merchant treating her more mature and more accomplished teacher as an inferior?' And again, 'Nothing can be meaner than the false pride exhibited by some girls towards the ladies who give them lessons in music, drawing, or languages: some have even been known to pass their instructress in the street without acknowledging the acquaintance'.[1] But such enlightened criticism was as yet by no means general. The writer of a notorious review in the *Quarterly* of 1848 laid his lash not only upon the heroines of two famous novels, but also upon the despised calling which they followed, and incidentally extended an odious patronage to the newly established Governesses' Benevolent Institution. It would be difficult indeed to understand, but for the chequered history of the past, how the instructresses of girls under their parents' roof could have come to occupy a position so pitiable, a position about which the reviewer, and not he alone, could employ phrases now only to be read with shame and dismay. The opening of the Governesses' Benevolent Institution, an eleemosynary foundation, in 1848 led on to a further effort to assist the intellectual as well as the material penury of a struggling class.

[1] *The Young Lady's Friend. A Manual of Practical Advice and Instruction to young Females on their entering upon the duties of Life after quitting school.* By a Lady, third edition, 1840, chap. ix, p. 147.

The first intention in founding a women's non-resident college in London ('the word college in this connexion had', we are told, 'to English ears a novel and an ambitious sound'), was to improve, by means of lectures and certificates of proficiency, the qualifications of women teachers, to give them what it is scarcely strange that they failed to possess, deeper self-respect, greater appreciation of the dignity of their calling. The lecture delivered by Frederick Denison Maurice upon the aims and objects of Queen's College, in the Hanover Square Rooms in March 1848, is of permanent interest; it described not only an epoch-making enterprise but the obstinate menace of the old and the young ardour of the new ideals, as they appeared, drawn up in battle-array, to the Lecturer's mind. The year 1848 is usually regarded as the crucial year, a period of revolution, in which, as one writer has said, 'Women's share was an attempt to throw off the shackles of ignorance'.[1] Almost simultaneously with the opening of Queen's College, on Church of England lines, came the opening, and the subsequent endowment, of Bedford College, on undenominational lines, by the efforts of Mrs. Reid and many women collaborators. Members of the first generation of Queen's College students, Miss Dorothea Beale and Miss Frances Buss, carried the challenge into wider fields: no other movement of the kind had survived the first generation of its promoters. Two great girls' schools, one in a crowded London area, one in a provincial town, quickly followed the pioneer colleges. The impetus gathered weight; the demand became ever more vociferous. Other women of distinctive talent joined the group of leaders, Anne Clough, Emily Davies, Barbara Bodichon. Where all had been chaotic and ill-ordered, system began to reign. Girls were admitted to qualifying tests of varying grades of difficulty; in 1862 a few pupils from progressive schools were permitted to try their mettle upon the papers of the Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations: in 1866, 202 girls sat for examination at ten centres.

[1] Alice Zimmern, *The Renaissance of Girls' Education* (1898).

In the same year Miss Beale and Miss Buss, and in their train the mistresses of numerous girls' schools, asked permission and were summoned to bear their testimony before the Schools' Inquiry Commission, a privilege hitherto undreamt of. There the old weaknesses and the new promise were brought out into the healthful light of day. Councils of women, associations to promote the cause of education, sprang up vigorously in many districts, opening schools in ever increasing numbers and of many different types. The question of endowments, of a share for girls in time-honoured benefactions and in those yet to be devised, were next considered; the Endowed Schools Act of 1869 actually laid down that in framing new schemes 'provision shall be made as far as conveniently may be, for extending to girls the benefits of endowment'. Nor does the fairy-tale end on this note of triumph. The demand for higher education in those of exceptional talent has yet to be satisfied. In embryo the women's colleges come one by one into being, at Cambridge, at Oxford, even their eager promoters scarcely as yet foreseeing the ultimate goal—full membership of ancient universities.

These, in bare outline, are the stages by which the historian of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries must pass; these are the manifestations of character, insight, and idealism into which it is his happy task to look more closely. The whole stands out in impressive relief when it is viewed against the background of history, the long struggle, the disability, the hope deferred.

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